

Theresa May hangs by a thread while plotting frenzy continues >>Pages 4&5

**Tories' nasty Brexit battles**



The recharged fightback against sexism >>Pages 14&15

**#MeToo—  
a tipping point?**



# Socialist Worker

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● ILL MUM OF  
FOUR DIES COLD  
AND ALONE AFTER  
BENEFITS STOPPED

● 'GET A JOB'  
TORY MINISTER  
TELLS DESPERATE  
CLAIMANTS

# UNIVERSAL DISCREDIT

by CHARLIE KIMBER

**THE TORIES' Universal Credit (UC) benefit regime is wrecking lives.**

But despite constant calls to stop its rollout, chancellor Philip Hammond won't be scrapping it in his budget next week. He's too busy devising means to keep fattening bosses and the rich.

Any changes in UC are already too late for Elaine Morrall, from Runcorn in Cheshire.

She died earlier this month after her benefits were stopped for not attending a UC interview.

**'How many more must die before this government realises it is killing vulnerable people?'**

**Linda Morrall,  
Elaine's mother**



ELAINE MORRALL died this month

Her mother, Linda, wrote a harrowing appeal on Facebook last week.

It gives a glimpse into the vicious Tory regime of benefit cuts and sanctions.

It reads, "How many people have got to die before this government realises they are killing vulnerable people?"

"My daughter died on the afternoon of 2 November at home on her own. She was 38 years old.

"In the cold with her coat

>>continued on page 3

## LABOUR

**Will new Scottish leader be a shift to the left?**

THE SCOTTISH Labour leadership election result will be out on Saturday—with left-backed candidate Richard Leonard favourite to win.

Leonard received more backing from trade unions and Labour Party branches.

His opponent Anas Sarwar won most Labour MPs, MEPs and MSPs.

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## TAX



**Documents leak show a Paradise for the rich**

THE LEAK of The Paradise Papers isn't just about celebrities dodging taxes—it's about how capitalism functions.

Reports into economic inequality don't even reflect the billions stashed away. And in some tiny islands there are more companies registered than residents.

>>Pages 10&11

## NHS

**Privatisation and cuts to blame for the winter crisis**

THERESA MAY has lashed out at NHS executives in a desperate attempt to deflect blame from Jeremy Hunt.

The tensions between Tory ministers and health bosses are a sign of the spiralling crisis in both the government and the health service.

>>Page 6

# KICK ALL THE TORIES OUT!



## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'We let Lenin rise, millions died. Now it's Islamism'

Niall Ferguson, right wing historian, says Muslims are the new Bolsheviks or something

### 'I'm sorry, where are all these people coming from who are such wilting flowers?'

Tory Sir Roger Gale tackles the real enemy—women reporting harassment from MPs

### 'Buck up, look confident and see everything in proportion'

Former foreign secretary Lord Hague tells Conservatives—things aren't as bad as they look

### 'It will take time to get the boy house-trained'

An MoD official on the new defence secretary Gavin Williamson

### The Conservative Party still seems punch-drunk after the election, bemused by ongoing sagas in the cabinet

Tory MP Johnny Mercer



# Police had 'no malice' when they hoped a boy was raped

**TWO COPS** were dismissed from the Avon and Somerset force last week after they were recorded saying they hoped a teenage boy "got raped".

PC Samuel Dexter and Hannah Mayo made the comments on the 14 year old's mother's answering machine. They didn't realise they were being recorded.

A misconduct hearing took place at the force headquarters near Bristol last Tuesday.

Both admitted gross misconduct and they were sacked without notice.

The officers had driven to the family's house after the boy's mother called them.

Dexter had previously searched for the boy that evening after he was reported missing.



When he called back to the house Dexter tried to phone but got no answer.

He said to Mayo that the boy "seemed to be relishing in the fact that I had been driving around

aimlessly looking for him. "I felt like saying to him, 'Whatever, you little shit, I don't give a fuck. I hope you get raped.'"

Mayo replied, "Yes, and butt raped."

The officers were then heard laughing on the tape.

Mark Loker of the Police Federation described the comments as "dark humour" and a "coping mechanism".

"There was no intent, no malice," he said.

"These officers are good cops who have made a very grave error in judgement."

A SENIOR police officer is being investigated over evidence he gave to a public inquiry into the death of Anthony Grainger.

Assistant Chief Constable Steve Heywood is being investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

Heywood approved the operation which resulted in Anthony's death in 2012.

The IPCC's investigation into Heywood is examining evidence regarding a fire-arms logbook.

The inquiry heard it was likely some of the notes had been written after the shooting, leading to claims they gave a "false impression" of intelligence.

Heywood admitted there were "some flaws" in his record keeping.

POOR KATE Middleton is still getting used to one of her children going to school. She said last week, "It is clear to me that it takes a whole community to raise a child. We're all in this together." Well perhaps a "whole community"—including the nanny who looks after him and the housekeepers who cook and clean, not to mention the ordinary people who fund the Royals—are indeed helping to raise George. But we're certainly not all in it together.



Kate Middleton

DEFENCE BOSSES have already spent £381 million overhauling tanks. Lockheed Martin was hired six years ago to fit new gun turrets.

But the upgrade is a year behind schedule. And one of the brigades that uses them is likely to be scrapped before the tanks turn up.

## Males at the Mail suffering witch hunt

IT DIDN'T take long for the right wing to go on the offensive over the sexual abuse and harassment claims sweeping Westminster and other institutions.

According to them, this is a "witch hunt" driven by people who just don't have a sense of humour.

But for some, this idea isn't distasteful enough.

Enter Max Hastings, columnist in the Daily Mail. According to him, women coming forward to report abuse and harassment are just like people who lynched black people in the segregated US.

"In segregated Southern states, whites seized victims—almost invariably



Sir Max Hastings

black men accused of raping or merely behaving disrespectfully towards white women—and hanged them," he wrote last week.

"Today in Britain, we are in danger of reviving that repugnant culture."

Not that the Mail would have spent much time defending those black men, mind.

## Three found guilty of attacking asylum seeker

THREE PEOPLE have each been found guilty of two counts of violent disorder in relation to an attack that left Reker Ahmed fighting for his life in Croydon, South London.

George Walder, Liam Neylon and Kurt Killick were all remanded in custody last week.

With the end of the trial it can be revealed that one person—James Neves—had already pleaded guilty to one count of violent disorder.

The attack, which took place on 31 March last year, left Reker with a fractured spine and skull.

Giving evidence, Hamo Mustafa told the



Reker Ahmed

court that he and Reker were told, "You are asylum seekers, you are refugees, you have to go back to your country."

Summing up, barrister Jonathan Polnay accused Killick of "stretching credibility to breaking point."

Daryl Davis, Danyelle Davis and Kyran Evans were all found not guilty.

## Educational pub trips

COMMONS STAFF used official credit cards to spend £1,500 on pub trips listed as "educational and parliamentary outreach".

And £140 from visits to the cinema was claimed as "office supplies", documents revealed.

A £200 football kit was claimed.

And a £30 book on facial hair was also among items bought by staff using government credit cards to pay for "business expenses".

A Freedom of Information reply showed House of Commons & Parliamentary Digital Service staff spent £630,000 using 205 cards in two years.

A spokesman for the House of Commons said all purchases were "genuine business transactions".

## All hail the Kent Tories

WAS former international aid secretary Priti Patel undone by the curse of the West Kent Conservatives?

Not long before resigning last week, she'd agreed to speak in Kent later this year. In March 2016, John Whittingdale agreed to address a dinner in July —by which time he'd been sacked as culture secretary.

In May this year, Canterbury MP Sir Julian Brazier was booked as the star turn at a summer garden party. A month later, he lost his seat.

"I am now looking for a speaker for our spring lunch," says agent Andrew Kennedy. "If there's anyone you'd like to see the back of, please let me know."

## The only good Nazi is...

FORMER ORGANISER for the Nazi British National Party Paul Hickman was found dead last week—days before he was due to appear in court.

Hickman was a leading member of the fascist National Action group.

Hickman was charged with race hate offences last year and accused of possessing multiple copies of two National Action leaflets with a view to the material being displayed or distributed.

The case has been adjourned until 20 November.

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# Universal discredit—how the Tories wreck our lives

>>>from page one

and scarf on. Because she wouldn't put her heating on until her kids came home from school. Why?? Because she couldn't afford it.

"Because she was severely depressed. Suffered from eating disorder and many other problems for many years.

"But she was deemed not ill enough for ESA [Employment and Support Allowance]. Had her benefits stopped numerous times, which in turn stopped her housing benefit.

"No income but expected to be able to pay full rent. Was told being in intensive care was not sufficient reason for failing to attend a universal credit interview.

"I went to the job centre to inform them that she couldn't attend. But benefits were stopped again.

"She was due to go to court on Monday. Is being dead now enough reason? Is that what's had to happen to prove she was ill?"

It's just under six weeks until Christmas. There are built-in delays and waiting periods involved in claiming UC.

If you applied for UC today you might receive two weeks' worth of benefit to keep you going until 2018. You might receive nothing.

Labour MP Ruth Gordon raised the issue in parliament this week. Damian Hinds, Tory minister in the Department for Work and Pensions, responded by saying people should stop relying on benefits and get a job.

## Opportunities

Hinds is a former president of the Oxford Union. He declared, "in the run-up to Christmas, when many temporary work opportunities are available, Universal Credit works much better for people, because they are able to access those opportunities."

UC is utterly failing claimants.

It's an instrument to deepen the regime of monitoring, sanctioning

ELAINE MORRALL died after her benefits were stopped

## BACK STORY

**Universal Credit combines and replaces six other benefits**

●The Tories claim it will make people better off. In truth it means more monitoring and sanctions

●Universal Credit also extends this regime from unemployed and sick people to low paid workers

●Labour recently won a vote in parliament to "pause" the scheme, but the Tories want to ignore this

●Claimants have to wait six weeks before receiving any money—and some wait over ten weeks

and controlling benefit claimants—and extend it from unemployed and sick people to low paid workers.

It doesn't "help" people find work.

It is designed to create a terror at being unemployed, which bosses can use to discipline workers into accepting worse conditions.

The rates of UC benefits have been frozen from April 2016. Yet inflation is currently running at 3 percent on the government's fixed CPI figure and almost 4 percent on the more realistic RPI figure.

This is taking £4 billion a year from claimants. A premium paid to families was scrapped this April,

taking £410 million.

Next year payments will not cover more than two children in a family, taking another £700 million.

Meanwhile the rich continue to stuff billions into their offshore accounts and see their wealth soar serenely upwards.

The Tories have to go.

Labour and the unions should be using the Tories' utter weakness to call protests and strikes to drive them out.

Join the People's Assembly  
#SackTheTories protests on Tuesday 21 November, the eve of the budget, across England. Go to [www.thepeople-sassembly.org.uk/budget\\_toriesout](http://www.thepeople-sassembly.org.uk/budget_toriesout)

## IN BRIEF

### Students plan demo over fees

STUDENTS WERE set to protest in central London on Wednesday of this week, demanding an end to university tuition fees.

The march also demands living grants paid to all students and an end to cuts in higher and further education.

The march was supported by a coalition of student organisations, Labour left group Momentum and Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader.

But it was not supported by the NUS students' union.

In a video posted on social media, Corbyn said "Everybody should have access to high quality education from the cradle to the grave, without being forced into debt and anxiety.

"No one should be shut out. That's why I support the demonstration for free education and Labour in government will deliver it."

### Use of bailiffs up 14 percent

BAILIFFS WERE called in to collect debts by councils in England and Wales more than two million times last year.

The Money Advice Trust charity found that council tax arrears accounted for 60 percent of cases sent to bailiffs by local authorities in 2016-17.

It said bailiffs were used to chase council tax arrears on 1.38 million occasions out of 2.3 million cases.

Bailiffs are being used 14 percent more than they were two years ago, according to the charity.

Joanna Elson of the charity said that using bailiffs could push people further into debt.

## Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and anti-working class rhetoric of the mainstream press.

We publish stories of successful strikes, protests and pickets that beat back the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

### I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

*Socialist Worker is a paper that has always supported workers in struggle.*

*It is now backing postal workers who are fighting back against Royal Mail's outrageous attacks on our*

*terms and conditions. Please support the appeal and build the solidarity for our fightback.*

**Mark Dolan**  
CWU union area delivery rep, North London

To donate go to [www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal)

Call 020 7840 5620 or send a cheque, payable to "SW Appeal" to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW

## IN THIS WEEK

# 1987

### King's Cross fire kills 31 people

A FIRE AT King's Cross station on 18 November 1987 killed 31 people.

A subsequent inquiry recommended minimum standards of fire cover and staffing.

Governments have since tried to scrap these safety regulations.



# May hangs by thread as Tory Brexit bunfight gets nasty

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEL-EVANS

**THERESA MAY** was losing her grip on her own party as MPs prepared to debate the **European Union (EU) Withdrawal Bill** on Tuesday.

The prime minister hoped to enshrine a set date to leave the EU at 11pm on 29 March 2019.

The parliamentary debate came amid ministerial resignations, warfare between the factions of the Tory party—and a looming coup which threatens to finish May off.

Some Tories tried to downplay the crisis. MP John Redwood declared, “The Conservative parliamentary party is united behind its leader.”

Yet up to 40 Tory MPs have said they are willing to sign a letter calling for a vote of no confidence in May. One senior Tory MP told The Independent news website, “Patience is wearing very thin—and in some cases it has snapped.”

An unnamed minister even suggested that it may be better for the Tories to lose an election rather than continue with May.

They said that the Tories are “getting closer and closer to the point whereby we need some time in Opposition to regroup”.

If eight more sign it would trigger a vote which could see May fall as prime minister.

## Deadlock

With no obvious replacement to her, the Tories had briefly united behind May in the hope of getting Brexit negotiations out of the way. But as negotiations are mired in deadlock, the knives are out for her once again.

Europe’s rulers demanded a two-week deadline on the terms of the hefty “divorce settlement” last week.

The EU Withdrawal Bill can only further split the Tories, and they are already divided over Brexit.

But the division between a “soft”

## BACK STORY

**The Tories remain mired in crisis as Theresa May grows weaker**

●Up to 40 Tory MPs have said they would sign a letter calling for a vote of no confidence in May

●Tories initially united behind May in the hope of getting Brexit negotiations out of the way

●But the negotiations are going nowhere—so the Tories have got their knives out for her again

●Two ministers resigned in a week and more could go, which would only deepen May’s crisis

and “hard” Brexit is a false choice. Both sides aim to protect big business and pander to racist scapegoating of migrants.

May’s position in the cabinet has been severely weakened.

Her closest ally and deputy, first secretary of state Damian Green, is currently the subject of a cabinet investigation (see right).

Her other ally, chancellor Philip Hammond, is facing pressure ahead of the budget (see page 5).

And it has already emerged that he was willing to knife her after the disastrous general election result.

Not wishing to be outdone by his father Stanley’s appearance on I’m a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here, Boris Johnson joined the fray.

Though yet to admit it to the confession cam, the foreign secretary has begun a dangerous elimination challenge in the cabinet.

Johnson and environment secretary Michael Gove sent a letter to May demanding a swift Brexit.

This was an attack on Hammond, who wants a transition period within the EU’s neoliberal single market.

Labour and the unions must be bolder.

We can exploit these divisions and call protests and strikes to drive out this band of sexist, racist robbers.

**THERESA MAY** with some of her cabinet—as things stood on Monday anyway

# More ministers are under pressure after two resign in just eight days

**PRITI PATEL** resigned from the cabinet last week. It followed the demise of Michael Fallon as defence secretary. That’s two cabinet ministers gone in the space of eight days.

Both remain as MPs.

Patel was forced out as international development secretary after details emerged of her 14 unauthorised meetings with Israeli politicians, officials and organisations.

Patel was accompanied by Lord Polak, honorary president of the Conservative Friends of Israel lobby group, which has given the Tories almost £400,000.

On her return, Patel pressed British officials to divert British aid money to the Israeli army to support operations in the Golan Heights.

## Seized

**This is the area seized from Syria in 1967.**

Patel was a champion of the hard Brexit right in the cabinet and her demise was bitterly resented by those Tories who are

sexual harassment from former Conservative activist Kate Maltby. Green denies the allegation.

Last week another top cop, Sir Paul Stephenson, confirmed that pornography had been found on Green’s office computer during a 2008-9 police investigation.

## Ulterior

The allegations were first made public by former Met Assistant Commissioner Bob Quick. Green said then that his accusers had “ulterior motives”.

Presumably he thinks the same about the second cop’s claims.

Green’s home and office were searched in 2008 and he was briefly arrested in November that year.

He faced no further action. Both Stephenson and Quick gave evidence to a Cabinet Office inquiry into Green’s conduct last week. The inquiry, which is being held behind closed doors, is also looking at the sexual harassment issue.

Green should go. And if he does it will deepen May’s crisis.

He faces an allegation of

Priti Patel—gone

already suspicious that May is “betraying Britain”.

May replaced Patel with Penny Mordaunt, who shares Patel’s views on Brexit.

Patel and Fallon may not be the last cabinet ministers to go.

As well as Boris Johnson (see right), May’s second-in-command Damian Green remains in the spotlight.

He faces an allegation of

# Labour amendments fail to defend free movement

LABOUR PLANNED to put forward a series of amendments to the European Union (EU) Withdrawal Bill defending the single market.

Shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer was set to open the debate calling for a “transition period” for staying in the neoliberal single market.

The Labour amendments don’t defend freedom of movement or the rights of EU migrants.

The Labour leadership are trying to box clever as the prospect of taking office becomes real.

They hope to win support from business—in the vain hope of seeing less resistance to their policies.

This was spelt out in Jeremy Corbyn’s speech at the CBI bosses’ conference earlier this month.

There he promised that Labour would

protect their interests in the face of Tory Brexit.

It echoes former Labour leader John Smith’s “prawn cocktail offensive” to reassure big business—but with a Remain garnish.

But pandering to the bosses would be a disaster for the left and would undermine Jeremy Corbyn’s radical appeal.

The real division is not between Leave and Remain voters.

It’s between those

who want to attack workers and migrants’ rights and those who want to defend them.

This is shown by the pro-Remain Starmer’s lack of support for freedom of movement.

The Tories are in trouble over Brexit.

Labour should grab the opportunity to put forward a socialist, anti-racist vision for Brexit—and not let the EU’s liberal defenders form a united opposition around a pro-business agenda.



Joseph Mifsud

after Johnson told a Commons committee that she had been training journalists at the time of her arrest.

Her husband, Richard Ratcliffe, says his wife is under extreme stress and that Johnson must “make amends”.

A picture has also

emerged of Johnson at a dinner with Joseph Mifsud.

Mifsud is linked to the probe into Donald Trump’s links with Russia and was named in the statement of charges against George Papadopoulos.

Papadopoulos, a former Trump campaign staffer, pleaded guilty to lying in evidence he gave to the FBI.

It emerged he had been offered “dirt” on Hillary Clinton during the election campaign.

Johnson has denied having ever met Mifsud.

# Another budget for the rich

CHANCELLOR Philip Hammond’s budget on Wednesday of next week will offer no real change from austerity.

Hammond is likely to say that, in his terms, the public sector pay cap has ended.

But the rise he

envisages will not match inflation, let alone reach the 5 percent several unions are demanding.

And any extra money will come from already overstretched budgets.

Nor will there be a big shift on housing.

The Tories have failed to agree a new housing programme.

The Treasury had been considering a small increase in tax on buy-to-let landlords.

But even this tiny change is now likely to be ditched.

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

# STOP THE DRIVE TO A NEW WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**T**HE PROSPECT of another war hangs over the Middle East—this time in Lebanon.

Western allies Israel and Saudi Arabia want a major confrontation with Iran.

Iran propped up Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, who has survived the civil war after crushing the revolution.

Syrian forces, along with Iranian-backed Lebanese group Hizbollah, were fighting to force Isis from its last stronghold in Syria as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

Now Saudi Arabian crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is trying to engineer a war against Hizbollah in Lebanon to push Iran back (see page 6).

Bin Salman forced Lebanese prime minister Hariri to resign last week with a speech attacking Hizbollah and Iran.

He wants whoever takes over to launch some form of confrontation with Hizbollah—which could mean civil war.

Hizbollah is a powerful political force in Lebanon. Alongside its military wing it also runs its own schools and hospitals.

So war against Hizbollah would be catastrophic. But Lebanese

politicians say they’re worried that Saudi Arabia will try to cripple them with a blockade if they don’t do what bin Salman demands.

Meanwhile Israel is threatening a bombing campaign against Hizbollah and Iran in Syria.

Rivals US and Russia reached an agreement last week to make Iranian-supported forces back away from Syria’s border with Israel.

But Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu rejected the deal. He said on Monday that Israel would continue its bombing raids in southern Syria.

Netanyahu all but admitted to colluding with Saudi Arabia against Iran in a speech in London

“

**A war against Hizbollah in Lebanon would be catastrophic for the Middle East**

Stop Saudi/UAE War on Yemen, Saturday 2 December, 1pm, UAE Embassy, London SW7 1 PT

earlier this month. And Israel has instructed its ambassadors in other countries to lobby in support of Saudi Arabia’s actions.

This conflict isn’t initiated by the West, but it is of its making.

The latest power struggle in the Middle East comes after more than a decade of Western wars designed to ensure US control of the region.

Under Donald Trump, the US has also returned to confrontation with Iran.

And Britain supplies Saudi Arabia with the weapons it needs to wage its war on Yemen. Former Tory minister Priti Patel’s secret meetings with Israeli politicians were all about supporting Israel’s operations along Syria’s border.

So if there is another war in the Middle East, Britain’s hands won’t be clean.

British politicians will justify the bombing raids and invasions in Syria and Lebanon. Some may even call for Britain to join in.

When that happens, everyone who wants to end the cycle of bloodshed will have to take to the streets against it.

Stop Saudi/UAE War on Yemen, Saturday 2 December, 1pm, UAE Embassy, London SW7 1 PT

# TAKE BACK ACADEMIES

**T**HE SCANDAL over Wakefield City Academies Trust has exposed the realities of privatisation (see page 6).

Many people want the schools abandoned by the trust to be run by the council.

That might seem impossible—but it can be done.

The Isle of Wight’s Sandown Bay academy was put into special measures earlier this year after failings by its sponsor, the Academies Enterprise Trust.

In a consultation, parents and

students overwhelmingly said it should be returned to council control.

The Department for Education has conditionally agreed—and plans are underway to create a council-run school.

The Tories have been pushed back nationally too. In March 2016 they unveiled plans to force every school in England to become an academy by 2020. Mass opposition and protests forced them to withdraw the attack within weeks.

Over two thirds of schools

in England are still run by local authorities, less than a third are academies and 2 percent are free schools.

We can defend publicly-run schools, but it’s a shame that Labour isn’t doing so. Shadow education secretary Angela Rayner said recently that Labour should “move on” from debates over academies.

Labour should oppose academies and fight for a properly accountable, comprehensive education system.

# STAND UP TO RACISM ACTIVISTS’ DIARY

**Saturday 9 December**  
Collect for the SUTR and Care4Calais Winter Appeal. Join the delegation to Calais

**Saturday 10 February**  
Come to SUTR’s Trade Union Conference to build the fight against racism at work

**Saturday 17 March**  
SUTR national demonstrations in London, Glasgow and Cardiff



For more details go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)



Damian Green—next to go?

## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Saudi-Iran rivalry is behind new turmoil

**SAUDI ARABIA** has mostly been a stable pillar of the imperialist order in the Middle East.

Its survival is guaranteed by the US to keep the oil flowing. The dynasty founded by King Ibn Saud has relied on ruthless repression and an ultra-conservative interpretation of Sunni Islam to hang onto power.

But increasingly Saudi Arabia is a force for instability. Just in the past ten days 200 people led by the billionaire investor Prince Alwaleed bin Talal have been arrested in an anti-corruption sweep.

In a peculiarly Saudi touch, suspects are being held in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Riyadh, the Saudi capital. Elsewhere in Riyadh Lebanese prime minister Saad al-Hariri announced his resignation, leading Iran and the president of Lebanon to accuse the Saudis of kidnapping him.

The situation is the product of a combination of internal and external factors.

For the past few years the Saudi government has been dominated by King Salman's ambitious son Mohammed. He is pushing through a programme of restructuring and privatisation aimed at reducing the economy's dependence on oil.

So far the results have been less than spectacular, so Mohammed bin Salman is raising the stakes. He had himself declared crown prince in June, forcing out his predecessor. And he's been using the issue of corruption to target his opponents.

Corruption is endemic to the Saudi regime. In 1996 the US embassy in Riyadh calculated that government stipends for the over five thousand descendants of Ibn Saud amounted to \$2 billion a year.

It estimated that senior princes made another \$5 billion off the Muslim holy places in Mecca and Medina, and also benefitted from kickbacks from government contracts.

So bin Salman's anti-corruption campaign is popular among ordinary Saudis. "But once you start this type of shakedown, where does it end," a former diplomat told the Financial Times newspaper. "The whole family has been doing the same thing, for generations."

Bin Salman has also stepped up Saudi Arabia's rivalry with Iran. Tehran is the capital of Shia Islam, which the Saudis detest. Iran also has recently made advances in the region, supporting Hizbollah, the Shiite political movement in Lebanon, and propping up the Syrian regime.

### Bloody

Bin Salman is the architect of the bloody war against the Shiite Houthis militia in neighbouring Yemen that it claims is backed by Iran. The Saudi intervention has killed thousands of civilians and created three million refugees.

The Saudis have been flexing their muscles elsewhere in the Gulf, seeking to ostracise Qatar.

Its rulers have committed the crimes of being friendly with Iran, allowing news channel Al-Jazeera to carry criticisms of Arab regimes, and supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The Saudis loathe the Brotherhood, which challenges their claim ideologically to dominate Sunni Islam.

But everything isn't going bin Salman's way, above all in the Arab heartland of Iraq and Syria. The relationship between Isis and Saudi Arabia is murky, but Riyadh undoubtedly supports jihadi groups in Syria that share the same Sunni purist ideology.

The recent fall of the Isis capital of Raqqa in Syria has helped the Assad regime. And Shiite militias trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard played a crucial role in taking the Isis stronghold of Mosul in Iraq. Both developments have increased Iran's regional power.

It looks as if bin Salman's response is to open a new front in Lebanon.

The Saudis' more aggressive foreign policy aimed to help fill the vacuum left by Barack Obama's relatively cautious approach in the Middle East. They were furious with him for abandoning the Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak.

Donald Trump by contrast has strongly endorsed bin Salman's policies. His first foreign visit as president was to Saudi Arabia. Eager to scrap the international pact over Iran's nuclear programme, he is hoping to use Riyadh as a counterweight to Tehran. The new wars this may provoke will bring yet more suffering to a tortured region.

# Cuts and privatisation are to blame for NHS winter crisis

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**THERESA MAY** lashed out at NHS England chief executive **Simon Stevens** last week in a desperate attempt to deflect blame from Tory health secretary **Jeremy Hunt**.

May said that Stevens would have to bear personal responsibility for the winter crisis in the NHS, as hospitals face a dangerous shortage of beds.

It comes after Stevens criticised May for underfunding the NHS. He called on Leave-supporting ministers to honour their £350 million funding pledge made during the EU referendum.

The tensions between Tory ministers and health bosses are a sign of the spiralling crisis in both the government and health services.

Hunt tried to regain the initiative last week with promises of a "robust, coordinated workforce plan" to deal with chronic staff shortages.

### Drop

But his announcement came after figures from the Ucas university application service showed a drop in the number of people applying for nursing courses.

The Tories axed the bursary for nursing, occupational therapy and other health students in April.

Allies of Stevens said that he was the "fall guy" for the crisis—but he is also responsible. Tory health secretaries since 2010 have built on the legacy of Tony Blair's Labour governments' free market reforms.

Stevens was hired to advise New Labour health



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

**ACTIVISTS SAY** the NHS is nearing crisis (top) NHS England boss **Simon Stevens** (left)

and contracts.

As health adviser Stevens was a key mover in NHS Plan 2000, which pushed the market deeper into the NHS.

The results of those free market reforms are seen in the NHS crisis today.

A combination of Tory budget cuts and privatisation, and the decimation of local authority-run social services, create the perfect storm.

### Rocketing

Poverty pay and rocketing workloads are pushing nurses and other health workers out of the NHS. Yet the Tories are still determined to push through Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs).

These aim to slash £22 billion from the NHS by 2020/21

under the guise of improving patient care. The STPs' next phase, Accountable Care Systems (ACS), further break up the NHS.

Labour has promised to "renationalise" the NHS, but it would still only make it the "preferred provider" when bidding for services.

The internal market should be abolished, private providers kicked out, health workers given above-inflation pay rises and the NHS a large injection of cash.

That means fighting for the NHS now, not waiting for a possible Labour government.

**Got a story?**  
Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

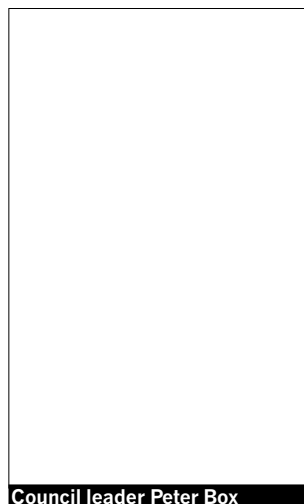
## Calls to take back Yorkshire schools

**THERE ARE** growing demands for schools abandoned by a multi-academy trust in Yorkshire to be taken back under local authority control.

Wakefield City Academies Trust (Wcat) announced in September that it would give up control of 21 schools.

A council meeting on 22 November is expected to back a motion calling for the schools to be taken back under public control.

It will also demand a public inquiry into the fiasco. Wakefield



Council leader Peter Box

council leader **Peter Box** recently wrote that the government, not the council, would decide who would run the schools.

But he added, "We will not simply sit back and let the government ignore the real needs of our children."

"We want a say in who will sort out the mess left behind by the total incompetence and failure of Wcat." Wcat transferred hundreds of thousands of pounds from school budgets to the trust's accounts before giving up the schools.

**Sadie Robinson**

### FIGURE IT OUT

**£220,000**

Was transferred to Wakefield City Academies Trust from Hemsworth Arts and Community Academy earlier this year

**£300,000**

From Heath View primary school in September 2016

**£800,000**

Transferred from Wakefield City Academy by the end of 2015

# More died in Grenfell Tower fire than the Tories will admit

New figures suggest that some 99 people died in the Grenfell Tower fire—and Kensington and Chelsea council is still dragging its feet on rehousing survivors, says **Alistair Farrow**

**AT LEAST 99 people died in the Grenfell Tower fire in west London in June.**

The Justice4Grenfell campaign released the figure after talking to survivors and relatives of the missing and the dead. It is higher than the official estimate of “at least 80”.

So far 68 names have been made public and of these 15 were children.

Another 31 people have been confirmed as missing by friends and relatives, but their names have not been released publicly.

Moyra Samuels from the Justice4Grenfell campaign told Socialist Worker, “Thirty one people have been identified but not named because families don’t want them publicly named.”

“We now need to go through floor by floor and match people up.

“In some cases we’re not going to get bodies because the fire was so fierce. Some people sublet their flats and are too frightened to say that people died there.”

And a series of studies over the past week have significance for the fallout from Grenfell.

The shocking inequality in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea formed the backdrop for the Grenfell Tower fire. That’s the finding of a report compiled by Emma Dent Coad, Labour MP for North Kensington.

Differences in life expectancy between some wards in the borough can be as much as 20 years says the new report.

The council continues to drag its feet over rehousing people. In the south of the borough the abandoned Sutton Estate has enough homes to rehouse everyone displaced by Grenfell.

“We’re five months on, the council could have done up the estate in five weeks,” said Moyra. “People could be living there now.

## Swaps

“And if people didn’t want to move there they could have done swaps with other council tenants.”

Dent Coed’s report came as Jeremy Corbyn launched a Labour Party campaign to put pressure on the Tories to fit sprinkler systems in high rise tower blocks.

He said this could “make a vital difference to people’s safety”.

A petition has been released calling on the Tories to put aside £1 billion for retro-fitting sprinklers.

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) submitted evidence to a review into building regulation and fire safety being carried out by Dame Judith Hackitt. The LFB called for fire



**ANOTHER 31 people have been confirmed as missing by friends and relatives**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

brigade involvement at the earliest possible stage in building planning.

It also called for formal qualifications for people installing fire detection and alarm units.

“It took a tragedy for everyone to take fire safety seriously and listen to what the brigade has been saying for years about skills,” said assistant commissioner for fire safety Dan Daly.

That echoes the warning issued by the Grenfell Action Group before the fire broke out.

And another study, Closing the Gaps—Health and Safety in Housing, has found that 85 percent of housing “experts” think current housing law is not fit for purpose.

To sign the petition for retro-fitting sprinklers in high rise block go to [bit.ly/2zAOKpD](http://bit.ly/2zAOKpD)

## Mayor eyes up prison site

**CAMPAIGNERS IN Islington, north London, have pressured London mayor Sadiq Khan to back calls for the Holloway Prison site to be used for housing.**

**But Khan isn’t supporting calls for council housing. He is instead focusing on “affordable” housing—which can cost as much as 80 percent of market rent.**

**“Holloway Prison is a major site capable of delivering a large number of new and affordable**

**homes for Londoners,” said Khan in a statement.**

**Khan’s housing adviser at City Hall was Islington’s lead councillor for housing. The connection may have had something to do with the statement.**

**The Holloway Prison site is ten acres and hundreds of homes could be built on it.**

**But the Ministry of Justice owns the site and would prefer to sell it to private developers to fund new “super prisons” outside London.**

## PROTEST

### Campaigners take on Tory budget

**HOUSING CAMPAIGNERS** are gearing up for a day of action on the day of the Tory budget—22 November.

It will include a protest at the Homes 2017 landlords conference and the release of Homes for All campaign’s Autumn Statement.

The day will close with a meeting in Parliament at 6.30pm which tenants, campaigners and members of the shadow cabinet are set to speak at.

Come to the National Housing Summit, Sat 25 November, 11am - 5pm, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD

## HOMELESSNESS

### Rise in people without homes

**THE NUMBER** of homeless people in Britain—307,000—outnumbers the population of Newcastle, a shocking new report shows.

The total is up 13,000 on last year.

The report, carried out by charity Shelter, includes rough sleepers and people in temporary accommodation.

Last year an overnight count found the number of rough sleepers had risen by 134 percent since the Tories took office.

The borough of Newham in east London has the highest rates—one in 25 people are homeless.

## REDEVELOPMENT

### Council wins back control of estate

**TENANTS, RESIDENTS** and campaigners in Hammersmith, west London, are hoping for a victory over developers.

Property developer Capco wanted to take over West Ken and Gibbs Green estates.

But if Capco’s plans for another site are approved they will back off—and the council say they will take over control.

One resident said, “It’s not a guarantee but it’s a loud announcement that it’s looking good.”

“It’s been a David and Goliath thing but you can win if you kick them in the knee caps.”



# Polish Nazi march met by protests in Warsaw

Anti-fascists made a step forward in the struggle against the far right.  
Andy Zebrowski writes from Poland

**A FASCIST-LED march tens of thousands strong took place in Warsaw on Polish Independence Day last Saturday. At the same time anti-fascists organised a counter-demonstration of thousands.**

On the fascist march flags with Celtic crosses and other fascist symbols flew alongside banners.

They read, “Europe will be white or depopulated”, “White Europe of brotherly nations” and, “Pure blood, sober mind”. And marchers chanted antisemitic, Islamophobic and anti-left slogans.

Fascist scum from across Europe took part in the march—including Tommy Robinson.

A group of eight courageous women infiltrated the fascist march with a banner saying, “Stop fascism”.

They were kicked, spat on and dragged out of the march by stewards. The police were nowhere to be seen.

## Thugs

They allowed the thugs to police themselves—but police were all over the anti-fascist demonstration.

Over the last few years the fascists have seized on the opportunity of mobilising people behind their banners on Independence Day.

Their so-called “Independence March” is many, many times bigger than anything else they can organise during the rest of the year.

For several years right wing politicians, journalists and broadcasters have normalised the fascists.

And the racist right wing Law and Justice party provides an alibi for many people who are not fascists to attend the march.

The government spews out racism against refugees through the state broadcaster.

There is often little difference between the government’s rhetoric and that of the fascists.

The anti-fascist demonstration was much smaller, but it did number thousands and had new people taking part for the first time.

## BACK STORY

**Fascists hold an annual march on Polish Independence Day on 11 November**

●Police claim 60,000 were at this year’s protest, making it smaller than previous years

●The Nazis have fed off the right wing government’s racism and bigotry towards refugees

●A thousands-strong counter-protest was a step forward for anti-fascists in Poland

●More people are turning against the Nazis

It united left organisations—including new left party Razem (Together) which got 550,000 votes in the last election—pro-choice activists, anarchists, trade unionists, LGBT+ activists and Greens.

Many more people are aware of the fascist nature of the Independence March organisers.

The police estimate was 60,000. This is a huge exaggeration, but is still smaller than last year’s estimate.

## Retreat

The fascist danger shouldn’t be minimised, but the reaction in Poland and abroad has caused the government to retreat a little.

Ministers have had to say that they don’t support the racist banners on the march.

We have seen these massive marches for some years now.

But on Saturday many anti-fascists felt that we have only begun to tap the reservoir of people disgusted by the fascists.

And that we can grow significantly if we reach out to them.

Andy Zebrowski is a revolutionary socialist in Pracownicza Demokracja (Workers’ Democracy) in Poland

## Catalonia

**OVER 700,000 people protested in Barcelona last Saturday demanding the release of top Catalan politicians. The Spanish state jailed eight ministers and the leaders of two main independence groups on charges on “sedition” for declaring Catalan independence last month.**

## UNITED STATES

# Socialist candidates have election success as voters turn against Trump

candidates elected across the US.

In Virginia the Democratic Party took 14 seats in the state’s House of Delegates. Republicans still have a majority in the House, but the shift is the largest in 20 years.

Charlottesville, where anti-racist Heather Heyer was murdered by a fascist in August, lies in the state.

Last Tuesday’s election results can largely be seen as a response to Charlottesville. And a rejection of the racism being pumped out from the Republican Party and the White House.

Among the victories in Virginia was the election of trans woman Danica Roem over Republican bigot Bob Marshall.

The contest drew national media attention because Marshall backed the Virginia version of the anti-trans “Bathroom Bill”. He also refused to debate Roem, who won by 8 percent.

Elsewhere in the US, lawyer and Black Lives Matter supporter Larry Krasner won the election for Philadelphia district attorney.

He ran on a programme promising to fight against police violence and deaths in custody.

While his party was being weakened at home, Trump was wrapping up his tour of Asia.

On Saturday he claimed, “We want progress, not provocation” over North Korea.

By Sunday he had changed tack, sarcastically saying he would never call Kim Jong-Un “short and fat”.

Two hours later he was offering his services as a middleman in the debate over ownership of the South China Sea. “I’m a very good mediator,” he said.

## Negotiated

Behind the bluster, Trump’s team has been negotiating new trade deals, details of which were set to be revealed this Wednesday.

As Trump ended his Asian tour he stopped off in the Philippines, and was met with protests.

Hundreds of people protested outside the US embassy in Manila carrying placards which read, “Dump Trump” and, “Down with US Imperialism”.

Protests need to greet Trump in Britain if he ever works up the nerve to come here.

**Alistair Farrow**



**On other pages...**

Offshore Treasure Island  
>>Pages 10&11

## Taking on the sexists

I AGREE that unions must be key to challenging sexism (Letters, 8 November).

Over 30 years ago I started my first full time teaching job in a further education college. All the other lecturers were male.

My line manager thought it was a friendly gesture to tugging my bra strap in our staff room.

I turned around and said very loudly, "If you ever do that again, I will have to break your neck."

"Have I made myself absolutely clear?" He replied sheepishly, "Yes."

It was the year after the Great Miners' Strike. I had learned, especially at the beginning of the strike, that it is important to challenge sexism.

And organising support for the strike gave people more confidence.

At the start of the strike I took a group of Yorkshire miners on delegation work around Manchester. They started complaining about having to follow a woman.

I said, "Not only are you following a woman, you're following a student with no sense of direction. Cut the sexist crap or I am leaving you here in the rain."

The following week I organised delegation work to take 40 miners round factories.

If the first example happened today, I suspect I would face a disciplinary hearing. Which is why it's so important for women to join trade unions.

Challenging sexism can be hard work, but it's important. Workplaces don't have to be miserable, oppressive places.

**Sally Kincaid**  
Leeds



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## Unions get behind fight to save Women's Aid service

A CAMPAIGN to defend South Yorkshire Women's Aid has been receiving an absolutely fabulous response from the trade unions.

The service faces closure due to lack of funding.

Our campaign appealed for support from trade unionists and we've been inundated.

Doncaster local government Unison union gave us £500.

Durham teaching assistants in Unison raised £200 of their own money to give to us. We got £50 from the Unison local government branch there too.

Manchester Unite health branch gave us £350, and the Unite power workers' branch donated £1,050. Barnsley trades council gave £100.

The FBU union in South Yorkshire and Humberside raised £200 for us—firefighters donated out of their own pockets.

We've also had support from some Labour branches. In Sheffield, Gleadless Labour gave us £100 and the Stainforth and Barnby Dun Labour branch donated £200.

We even got £1,000 from Open Gardens, a charity. Some groups have offered us rooms to work from too.

The service will carry on with support from the community, but this is only a short term solution.

Long term, ring fenced funding from government and the local authority is urgently needed in

order to keep women safe.

The donations are a recognition that women should have a specialist domestic violence service and that women campaigners should be listened to.

The support from trade unions is solidarity for an anti-austerity campaign.

This campaign is asking its own Labour MPs, councillors and council to follow the lead of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Reject cuts—and help us fight for a better, safer, caring society.

**Louise Harrison**  
Doncaster

Donate at [bit.ly/2zthnCG](http://bit.ly/2zthnCG). Join weekly protests at the civil building in Doncaster—Mondays from 11.30am

## Don't use tragic death to whip up homophobia

DAILY MAIL columnist Sarah Vine wrote a horrifically homophobic article about the killing of infant Elsie Scully-Hicks by her adoptive father.

Her adoptive parents were a gay couple. Vine spouted that, "Political correctness helped kill little Elsie" but this is untrue.

Cuts to social services meant that the family situation may have been missed by stressed workers.

And mental health services obviously failed the father. It's not just that the

parents failed the child, it's that the government failed this family.

When such cases come about in heterosexual households, the sexual orientation of the perpetrator is never mentioned. So why in this case is homophobia used as propaganda, using the caregiver's sexual preference as ammunition?

This was a tragedy, but "political correctness" did not kill this child.

**Rosa Johnston-Kincaid**  
Leeds

## Pay ballot has changed my workplace

THE PCS union's recent consultative ballot for strikes over pay has been galvanising in my office.

Members are impressed at the 79.2 percent vote for industrial action. The 48.8 percent turnout was the highest in the union's history.

We think it shows that we can win a strike ballot despite the Tories' anti-union laws.

We have had weeks of long conversations about pay where some people said we need a week's strike to hit employers where it hurts.



The PCS delivered a huge vote

Even before the ballot started we were discussing how to raise money for members to come to picket lines and meetings.

The mood has been lifted by political

discussion that spread from pay to racism and refugees.

The sort of problems that people used to put up with have turned into demands for better conditions.

It isn't easy to walk out—some of us are nervous about strikes and many would struggle to manage without a few days' pay.

But my office is boiling and now is the time for the leadership of PCS to give us the chance to strike and win.

**PCS civil service workplace rep**

Just a thought...

## Why the US backs Israel

WITH REGARD to your article on the Golan Heights (Socialist Worker online, 8 November), Dick Cheney and Rupert Murdoch have been granted oil drilling rights there.

The US supports Israel financially. Israel is clearing out Palestine to make it accessible to drilling.

**Jill Chapman**  
On Facebook

## Bye bye to Theresa May?

SURELY THERESA May has lost all credibility now after Priti Patel totally undermined her (Socialist Worker online, 9 November).

This is a government of the rich for the rich.

**Roberto Ro**  
On Facebook

## 1917 did a 'great service'

THEY WERE courageous and did humanity a great service (1917, when workers shook the world, 1 November).

**Zamile August**  
On Facebook

## Catalans—rich or righteous?

THEY WANT to leave Spain as they are a wealthy region and don't want to share their wealth (Spanish state begins to jail Catalan government, 2 November).

**Lynn White**  
On Facebook

● I BELIEVE the Spanish government should enable the debate, rather than persecute and imprison a democratically elected government.

**Joe McMaster**  
On Facebook

● EVEN MORE pleased I voted Brexit from this shower of vengeful shits who preach social democracy.

**John Lawson**  
On Facebook

## UVF collusion with the cops

COLLUSION IS not an illusion! (New documentary shows cover up behind Ulster Volunteer Force killings, 4 November).

**Conor McCarry**  
On Facebook

# OFFSHORE TREASURE ISLANDS

The latest leak of dodgy offshore tax documents from a company called Appleby, the Paradise Papers, isn't just about celebrities dodging taxes—it's about how capitalism survives, writes **Simon Basketter**



**I**N 2010 a lawyer for James H. Simons, the billionaire founder of the hedge fund Renaissance Technologies, submitted a secret application to Bermuda's highest court.

They were making changes to a trust fund Simons had quietly maintained on the island since 1974.

Getting approval required Simons to give the court, but not publicly, data relating to his overall wealth. But Simons' legal team insisted he should do no such thing.

The "exact quantum" of Simons' wealth was a strictly private matter, trust lawyer John Robert Balfour Richmond argued, in what should be called the "Just Google it" defence.

He told the court, "A Google search against Mr. Simons' name will throw up any number of estimations of his or his family's wealth." While Google itself knows a lot about avoiding tax, a search for Simons' wealth would be quite a few billion quid out.

Simons had amassed £5.6 billion in a very low-profile Bermudan trust that is one of the largest private trust funds ever discovered.

A secret accounting document attached to the 2010 filing projected that the offshore fortune would grow to £12 billion by the end of this year, and reach £26 billion by 2030.

Just eight people control as much wealth as the more than three billion people who make up the poorest half of the global population.

That's the conclusion of a report released in January by Oxfam, relying on the Forbes magazine billionaire list and data from investment

## LOBBYISTS

### Access all areas

TAX AVOIDERS have "superb penetration" at the highest levels of the Tory government. That was the claim made by the International Financial Centre's (IFC) forum shortly before the G8 summit in 2013.

Promises of clamping down on tax evasion at the summit came to nothing.

In the weeks leading up to the summit, the IFC secured meetings with David Gauke, who was then the exchequer secretary to the Treasury. Gauke has now been promoted to work and pensions secretary clamping down on poor people's benefits.

They also met officials at HMRC, Lord Blencathra, Lord

Flight and the permanent secretary at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

A week before the G8, they secured an 80-minute meeting with Dominic Martin, an official in the Cabinet Office who was then director of the Britain's G8 presidency unit.

The access was organised by Lansons, a PR and lobbying firm in London. IFC members were told that their concerns had been "passed to UK experts preparing Cameron".

The IFC, it said, had provided "a full briefing regarding our concerns over a public registry of beneficial ownership. Well done Lansons for orchestrating contact at this very high level."

Two days before the summit the IFC secured another "crucial meeting" with Shona Riach, a Treasury official.

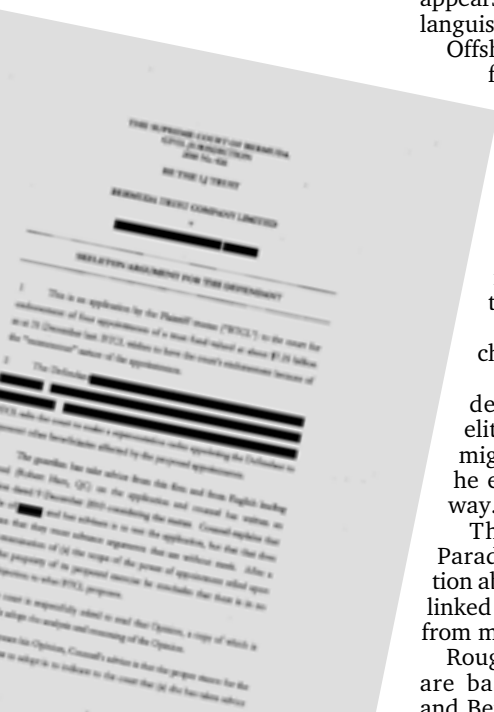
G8 leaders met on 17 June and a day later, Richard Hay from IFC gloated that the government had backed off from introducing any transparency.

"The UK did not get buy-in for the intrusive and unworkable proposals—evident hubris for those claiming its adoption by G8 was inevitable," he said.



International Finance Centre, Hong Kong

**The secret court submission to a hearing in Bermuda on the billions held by hedge fund owner James H Simons (below)**



bank Credit Suisse.

Forbes celebrated this year as "another record year for the wealthiest people". Three—Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Warren Buffett—own as much wealth as the bottom half of the US population.

Billionaires included in Forbes's list of the 400 richest people in the US were worth a combined £2.2 trillion—more than the economic output of Britain.

But in the case of Simons he is at least four times as wealthy as he appears on the Forbes list. Where he languishes at 25th richest.

Offshore trusts are a powerful tool for the wealthy to store, protect and grow their stashes under a veil of privacy.

An offshore trust based in Bermuda can, for instance, own assets in Taiwan on behalf of a beneficiary in California. They play off tax rules and regulations around the globe.

They are of course often charitable foundations.

Jeffrey Winters is an academic who studies economic elites. "There's a reason why this might feel like a hall of mirrors," he explained. "It's designed that way."

The leaked files from the Paradise Papers contain information about over 2,600 offshore trusts linked to individuals and companies from more than 100 countries.

Roughly two thirds of these trusts are based in the Cayman Islands and Bermuda. "The Bermuda trust,"

according to an article on Appleby's website, "is a popular estate planning vehicle for private clients wishing to structure their affairs in a tax efficient manner."

The leaked documents from Appleby's Bermuda office show that, between 2012 and 2015, the firm provided legal services to at least five secretive trust structures. Each one contained a billion dollars or more.

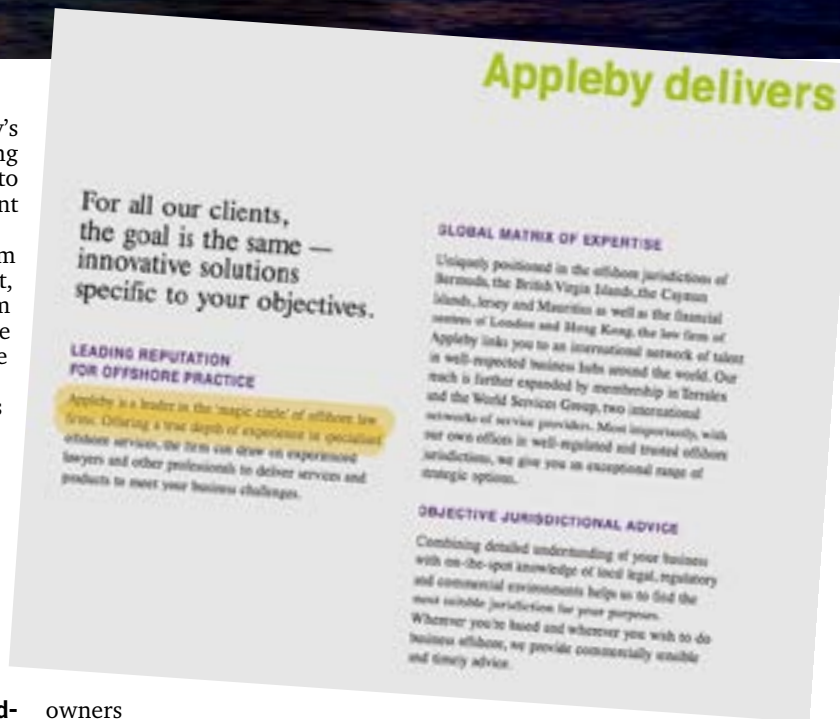
In each case, the Appleby file lists the clients as "CONFIDENTIAL." One of these anonymous clients held three related trusts—two in Bermuda, one in the Bahamas—that together contained £6 billion in 2015. It remains unclear who is behind these particular fortunes.

**JAMES Simons founded Renaissance Technologies in 1982. It developed secret trading algorithms making Simons a billionaire many times over.**

Simons has given fortunes to the Democratic Party in the US. Meanwhile, his business partner at Renaissance, Robert Mercer, is a top Republican Party donor and influential backer of Donald Trump's presidential campaign. Mercer is also an Appleby client.

No one knows how many more massive holdings remain undiscovered offshore.

Economist Gabriel Zucman estimated that £5.4 trillion in assets of wealthy households has simply gone missing in countries, mainly tax havens, other than those where the



owners

reside. That doesn't include corporations or money that is declared by individuals—even if they don't pay tax on it.

"There's a lot of wealth that's becoming harder and harder to measure," Zucman said. "The end result is that we know way too little about how wealth is distributed and how wealth is growing."

The line between legitimate and illegitimate tax and money scams is so thin only lawyers can see it.

Depending on how you do the sums, up to 15 percent of total global wealth is stored in tax havens.

Companies only pay tax on their profits—and it's possible to structure your company so that, on paper, you

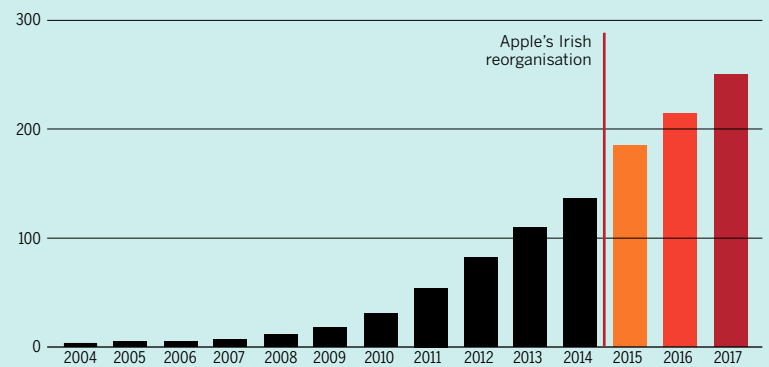
make almost nothing. Capitalism is built on accumulation—turning money into more money. It's enforced by ruthless competition. Capitalists who fail to grab as much as they can risk being torn apart by the rest.

Glencore, the world's biggest commodity trader, was one of the top clients of Appleby. Appleby's Bermuda office even had a "Glencore Room".

The exploitation of the world's resources is dependent not just on profits from the markets but on the back room scams of tax minimisation.

For all the noise about clamping down on tax havens the truth is the system relies on them.

## APPLE CASH 'PARKED' OFFSHORE (\$ BILLION)



## APPLE

### Taking an ever bigger bite out of our public services

IT WAS May 2013, and Apple boss Tim Cook was angry. He was before the US Senate inquiry into how Apple avoided tens of billions of dollars in taxes by shifting profits into Irish subsidiaries that the inquiry chair called "ghost companies".

"We pay all the taxes we owe, every single dollar," Cook declared. "We do not depend on tax gimmicks. We do not stash money on some Caribbean island."

Five months later, Ireland announced a bit of a crackdown. Apple's advisers at one of the world's top law firms, US-headquartered Baker McKenzie, canvassed Appleby.

They emailed a list of 14 questions to Appleby's offices in the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey.

One email asked for confirmation "that an Irish company can conduct management activities without being subject to taxation in your jurisdiction."

Apple also asked for assurances that the local political climate would remain friendly.

The firm's lawyers asked, "Are there any developments suggesting that the law may change in an unfavourable way in the foreseeable future?"

In the end, Apple settled on Jersey, which charges no tax on corporate profits for most firms.

Meanwhile, the Irish government's crackdown on shadow companies has had little effect. For years Apple reported two-thirds of its profits were made outside US and taxed at a low single digit rates. It continues to do so.

## Parasites in Paradise

**THE NETHERLANDS, Ireland and Bermuda have become go-to destinations for big corporations looking to avoid taxes.**

**Between them these three spots hold less than one-third of 1 percent of the world's population but over a third of the profits that US multinationals reported overseas last year.**

**Britain tries to keep up. It is a firm participant in the race to the bottom, keeping taxes low to "attract business".**

**Blackstone, the private equity firm of Donald Trump associate Stephen Schwarzman, minimised tax payments on large rental properties in Britain. The properties were held by trusts in Jersey, themselves owned by subsidiaries in Luxembourg.**

**No tax was paid anywhere.**

**The company said, "Blackstone's investments are wholly compliant with UK and international tax laws and regulations." Which is true.**

**Blackstone also said that, "the arrangements were commonplace for such real estate investments." Which is also true.**

## A right royal racket

MANY TAX havens are British-run overseas territories. These include the Cayman and British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Guernsey Jersey, and the Isle of Man.

Just 90,000 people live on the Channel Islands—yet 800,000 companies are registered there. There are 400,000 firms and around a trillion pounds worth of assets registered in Jersey alone. All are untaxed.

The British Virgin Islands have 30,000 people and 457,000 companies.

According to the US government, some 75 percent of the world's hedge funds are "located in" the British Caymans. There are some £4.5 trillion of US bank deposits located in British "crown colonies".

No wonder the queen banks offshore.



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### BRISTOL

##### Abortion Wars—the Fight for Reproductive Rights

Book launch with author Judith Orr  
Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

#### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

##### Abortion Wars—the Fight for Reproductive Rights

Book launch with author Judith Orr  
Wed 13 Dec, 7.30pm,  
William Morris  
Community Centre,  
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,  
E17 6QQ

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

#### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

##### Are we too late to stop catastrophic climate change?

Wed 22 Nov, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

#### BOLTON

##### From Deliveroo to McStrike—why socialists support strikes

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St (off  
Bradshawgate),  
BL1 1DY

#### CAMBRIDGE

##### Why socialists should support changing the Gender Recognition Act

Thu 23 Nov, 7.30pm,  
River Lane Centre,  
River Lane, CB5 8HP

#### CARDIFF

##### Lenin for today

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community  
Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

#### CHESTERFIELD

##### How do we get the wealth off the rich?

Thu 23 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

#### DUDLEY

##### 70 years since the partition of India—what is the legacy today?

Wed 29 Nov, 8pm,  
The What Centre,  
23 Coventry St,  
Stourbridge, DY8 1EP

#### DUNDEE

##### Is Trotsky relevant for us today?

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary  
Action,  
10 Constitution Rd,  
DD1 1LL

### SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS



Demonstrations during last month's general strike

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

As Spanish state cracks down...

# Catalonia, independence and resistance

#### BRADFORD

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
Glyde House,  
Little Horton Lane,  
BD5 0BQ

#### BRIGHTON

Thu 23 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St,  
BN1 1AF

#### BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Red Triangle Cafe,  
160 St James's St,  
BB11 1NR

#### EDINBURGH

##### Sexism and the system—the fight for women's liberation

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

#### EXETER

##### 100 years after the Balfour Declaration—how can Palestine be free?

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
Exeter Community Centre,  
17 St. Davids Hill,  
EX4 3RG

#### GLASGOW

##### Red Rosa—The life of revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
Avant Garde,  
33-44 King St,  
Merchant City, G1 5QT

#### HUDDERSFIELD

##### Genocide in Myanmar—why is it happening?

Wed 22 Nov, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade,  
HD1 5JP

#### LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

##### From Houston to Bangladesh—how can we stop climate change?

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

#### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

##### What are "British values"?

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore  
Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

#### LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

##### Child poverty and growing inequality—will the budget help?

Thu 23 Nov, 7.30pm,  
The Pepperpot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close,  
Ladbroke Grove (very close  
to the station), W10 5XL

#### LONDON: Brixton

##### The state and revolution today

Wed 22 Nov, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,  
facing Windrush Square),  
SW2 1EP

#### LONDON: EALING

##### Capitalism vs socialism—the battle for the future

Thu 23 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Y Lounge,  
YMCA West London,  
25 St Mary's Rd, W5 2RE

#### LONDON: ISLINGTON

##### Britain—boom or bust, are we headed for another crash?

Thu 23 Nov, 7pm,  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St,  
N7 6QT

#### LONDON: LEWISHAM

##### 50 years after the Abortion Act—the fight for abortion rights today

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community  
and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd  
(near Greenwich main  
line and DLR station),  
SE10 8JA

#### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

##### Why we oppose border controls

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
William Morris  
Community Centre,  
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,  
E17 6QQ

#### MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

##### 100 years on—why do we celebrate the Russian Revolution?

Wed 22 Nov, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

#### NEWCASTLE

##### From Malcolm X to Black Lives Matter—the struggle against racism in the US

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
The Journey Cafe (near  
Newcastle central library),  
New Bridge St W,  
NE1 8AN

#### NORWICH

##### What is going on in Venezuela?

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place,  
NR2 2SA

#### PORTSMOUTH

##### Going beyond the binary—Marxism, gender and trans politics

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown  
Community Centre,  
River's St,  
PO5 4EZ

#### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

##### Independence and the national question today

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near  
Crucible Theatre),  
S1 2JB

#### SOUTHAMPTON

##### Tories in crisis—will they stop Brexit?

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Central Baptist Church Hall,  
Devonshire Rd,  
SO15 2GY

#### SWANSEA

##### From Deliveroo to McStrike—how has the working class changed?

Thu 23 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Brynmill Community  
Centre,  
St Albans Rd,  
SA20BP

#### WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

##### 100 years since the Balfour declaration—can Palestine be free?

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Wild Bytes Cafe,  
Darlington St,  
WV1 4HW

#### YORK

##### What is fascism and how do we fight it?

Wed 22 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4AH

### { STAND UP TO RACISM }

#### LONDON

##### Fighting racism and Islamophobia

Tue 21 Nov, 6.30pm,  
Ricardo Lecture Theatre,  
Drayton House,  
30 Gordon St,  
WC1H 0AN  
Speakers: Moazzam Begg,  
Colette Levy, Naima Omar

#### NATIONAL

##### Winter Refugee Appeal Solidarity Convoy

Sat 9 Dec.  
Organised with Care4Calais.  
To sign up for the convoy, email  
[mandybrowncow@yahoo.com](mailto:mandybrowncow@yahoo.com)  
**Stand Up To Racism Trade Union Conference**  
Sat 10 Feb, 11-4.30pm  
Register at [bit.ly/2jj3p0p](http://bit.ly/2jj3p0p)

#### OXFORD

##### Confronting the rise in racism

Tue 21 Nov, 7pm,  
Oxford Town Hall,  
St Aldate's,  
OX1 1BX

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } APPEAL EVENTS

#### LONDON: WEST AND NORTHWEST

##### Appeal gig

Fri 8 Dec, 7pm until late  
Ochard Cafe,  
Singapore Rd,  
W13 0EP

#### EAST LONDON

##### Socialist History Walk

Sun 26 Nov, 11am,  
Meet at Mile End station,  
E3 4DH.  
Come along and enjoy a  
walk around Bow, east  
London, to find out about  
its inspiring history.  
Tickets £5 or £3 concessions  
Ring 07960 349290 to book

### CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600  
Email  
[enquires@swp.org.uk](mailto:enquires@swp.org.uk)  
Post PO Box 71327,  
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## MARXISM 2018

A political festival hosted by the  
Socialist Workers Party

THURS 5 UNTIL  
SUN 8 JULY 2018,  
CENTRAL LONDON

[marxismfestival.org.uk](http://marxismfestival.org.uk)

# Posters and photos reignite the visions of Russia's revolt

A new design exhibition in London gives a graphic illustration of the impact of revolution and counter-revolution in Russia after 1917, writes **Nadia Sayed**

**ON 25 October 1917 the seizure of Petrograd marked the beginning of the October Revolution.**

100 years later the Red Star Over Russia exhibition at the Tate Modern brings the culture unleashed by the revolution to London.

Compiled from the collection of the late graphic designer David King, the exhibition shows how art was shaped throughout this period.

The viewer is taken on a journey. It begins with photographs of soldiers and workers next to newly erected statues of Marx and Engels following Lenin's decree to destroy and replace Tsarist monuments.

Through photographs of the Agitprop trains and 1930s magazine USSR in Construction, you realise the deep and lasting effect of October on art and culture.

## Collectively

Artists such as Aleksandr Rodchenko, El Lissitzky and others from the new avant-garde wave worked collectively, whether with other artists or with friends and partners.

Murals on Agitprop trains and postcards such as those by Gustav Klutsis for the Moscow All-Union Olympiad show how art was made more accessible.

A massive theme throughout the exhibition was the effect of Stalin's counter-revolutionary terror upon art and culture.

We see it in the line-up of mugshots that places the poet Osip Mandelstam beside Stalin's political rivals like Zinoviev and Kamanev.

We see it in the doctored photographs and posters from which "enemies of the people" have been removed.

Many of the artists featured in the exhibition, such as Klutsis and



Lissitzky, were victims of Stalin's purges.

What's reflected well in the collection is how liberating October was. Women take centre stage in much of the art work. The first room, Art Onto

the Streets, displays posters written in languages besides Russian and English, including Arabic.

Another example is the poster by Viktor Koretsky, entitled Our Army is the Army of Liberation of the



**Adolf Strakhov's poster Emancipated Woman—Build Socialism! from 1926 (left). King's book, from which many of the exhibits are taken (above).**

Working People. It depicts two men, a soldier and a worker, kissing.

One of the most powerful pieces is the large, painted fabric banner in the first room, which bears the slogan With a United Front We Will Overcome Obstacles in Building a Socialist Industry in Villages.

The viewer is confronted with the image of a Muslim and Russian worker shaking hands, a message that is still relevant and needed today.

While the exhibition isn't cheap, the centenary of the Russian Revolution only happens once. This exhibition does well at showing the aspirations, vision and ideals of those who made the revolution.

Red Star Over Russia—a revolution in visual culture. Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1 9TG. Until 18 February. Tickets £13.30/£12.30/£11. [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk)

## EXHIBITION

### THE PAST IS NOW—BIRMINGHAM AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, B3 3DH. Until 12 March. Go to [bit.ly/2yOIJEl](http://bit.ly/2yOIJEl)

**THIS EXHIBITION** is designed to challenge the narrative used to sanitise the history of the British Empire.

It explores other perspectives, which have been historically misrepresented.

And it looks at the legacy of the empire in institutions and ideas today.

The exhibition also seeks to examine the museum's own bias in telling difficult narratives.



## EXHIBITION

### DESIGNS ON BRITAIN

Jewish Museum, Raymond Burton House, 129-131 Albert St, NW1 7NB. Until 15 April. Go to [bit.ly/2jfkTuw](http://bit.ly/2jfkTuw)

**DESIGNS ON Britain** is a look at how Jewish immigrants to Britain have shaped the history of design here.

The exhibition includes Jewish migrant designers including Dorrit Dekk, FHK Henrion and Hans Schleger.

They brought a knowledge of modernism and radically transformed the practice and language of design in Britain.

## TOP 5 BOOKS

**Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop**

- 1 Lenin For Today**  
John Molyneux
- 2 Abortion Wars**  
Judith Orr
- 3 Russia 1917**  
Dave Sherry
- 4 A Very Capitalist Condition—A history and politics of disability**  
Roddy Slorach
- 5 Russia in Revolution—An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928**  
SA Smith

Phone 020 7637 1848  
[bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)  
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

# Philip Pullman revisits the world of His Dark Materials

## BOOK

### LA BELLE SAUVAGE

Written by Philip Pullman  
£9.99

AS THE twentieth century wore to a close, Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials trilogy offered a vastly superior alternative to the interminable adventures of Harry Potter.

The trilogy—and its continuation in Pullman's latest book, La Belle Sauvage—takes inspiration from what

is sometimes seen as an implication of quantum mechanics, that there are an infinite number of coexisting universes.

Pullman's story unfolds in another universe where there was no Reformation. A single, authoritarian church, the Magisterium, presides over an alternative modernity of flying ships and electric cars. There are also beautiful flying witches and armoured talking bears.

La Belle Sauvage—the first in a new trilogy, The

Book of Dust—is a prequel to His Dark Materials. Here we learn how the first trilogy's wild irresistible heroine Lyra came to be the ward of an old Oxford college.

## Universes

Whereas the earlier books ranged across their world and into other universes (including our own), this one is firmly located in Pullman's brilliantly realized alternative Oxford.

Pullman lives in Oxford and his settings are

real—the Trout Inn, Port Meadow, Jericho. Perhaps more strongly than in the earlier books, one senses a certain nostalgia for the older, slower, more deferential England of Pullman's childhood and youth in the 1950s and 1960s.

But this is an England disrupted by a tremendous flood—a powerful and contemporary image of ecological catastrophe. Swept along on it is the little boat La Belle Sauvage. Its owner,

11-year-old Malcolm, is fleeing with teenage Alice and the baby Lyra, trying to save the child from sinister pursuers.

The flooded dream-like Thames landscape they escape through sometimes recalls one of J G Ballard's best novels, The Drowned World. Malcolm, Alice, and Lyra experience some strange mythological encounters. Even at their journey's end much is left unexplained, whetting our appetite for the next novel. **Alex Callinicos**

**T**HERE IS a wave of anger directed at Hollywood and Westminster as hundreds are speaking out over widespread sexual harassment and abuse.

Famous Hollywood actors, Westminster staffers and journalists talk openly about it.

And the media have been forced to ask how serious allegations were hushed up by those keen to protect the reputations of the powerful.

The scale of the revelations has been unprecedented—and it is very welcome that women have shown the courage to come forward.

In both the Hollywood and Westminster scandals many people felt unable to speak out for years or even decades about what had happened.

It feels that we are at a tipping point in the fight against sexism.

There are moments when anger which has been bottled up, denied and held back suddenly breaks through.

People gain confidence from one another and a trickle becomes a flood.

Although there is still a battle, there's a sense that something has now shifted in social attitudes towards sexual harassment and abuse.

Those who blame women and diminish their experience have been thrown onto the back foot.

And movements against sexual violence in recent years have boosted women's confidence to come forward.

### Equality

But the allegations also come at a time when liberal capitalism has failed to deliver even on its promise of formal equality for women.

Workplaces may not have the same openly sexist cultures of 40 years ago but, unlike the 1990s or 2000s, no one is claiming that “women have never had it so good”.

And women now rightly expect to go to work, have the same rights, and be free of sexual harassment.

Yet 50 years after the Abortion Act and 37 years after the Equal Pay Act, women are still fighting for control of their bodies and for workplace rights.

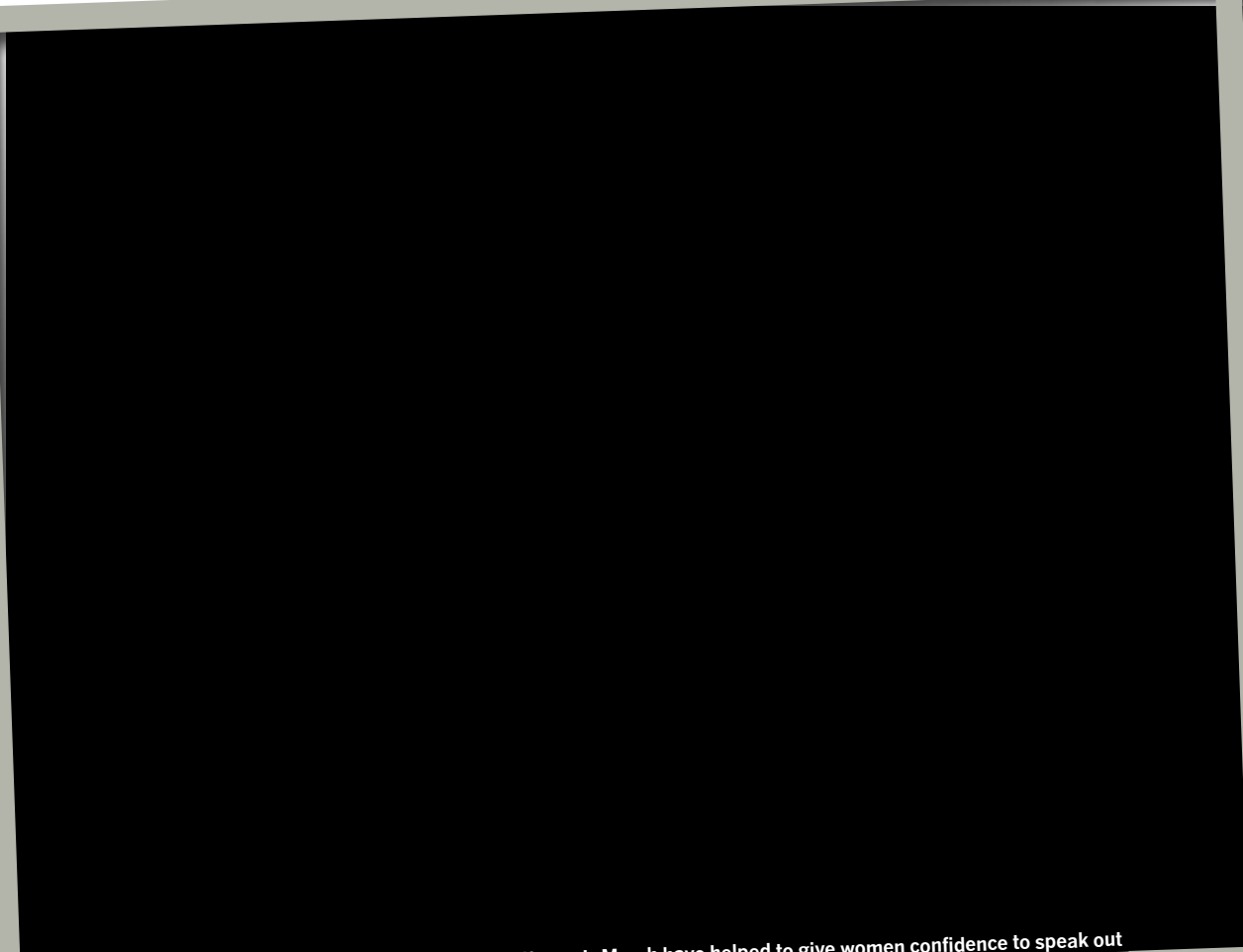
Since the beginning of the 21st century we have seen a resurgence in feminist theory and organisation.

In 2011 Canadian students organised “Slutwalk” protests in Toronto.

A police officer had said “women should avoid dressing like sluts” in order to protect themselves from sexual assaults.

Feminist activists organised similar “Slutwalks” in cities across the world.

And the following year huge demonstrations swept Delhi after 23 year old student Jyoti



A RENEWED fightback around movements such as the Women's March have helped to give women confidence to speak out

# #METOO—A TIPPING POINT?

Women are speaking out over sexual harassment and discrimination. Sarah Bates argues it is capitalism's failure to deliver on its promises of equality, and resistance by women, that lies behind this recharged fightback



Harvey Weinstein

Singh died after being gang raped.

Thousands marched in other Indian cities demanding that more be done to protect women.

This recharged fight reflects a new generation of activists who want to organise against sexism.

The Women's Marches in January this year saw millions take to the streets across different continents.

They were a beacon of hope



**Women who have achieved professional success still face sexism**

in the aftermath of the inauguration of Donald Trump, the vile misogynist who boasts of “grabbing women by the pussy”.

But Trump's election was also a stark warning about how much is still to be won.

Sexism is not gradually fading away—and the fight for women's rights can go backwards as well as forwards. It affects the majority of women and workplaces.

While many women may have achieved a degree of

success in their professional lives, they are still subject to the most horrific sexism.

There is a clash between the promises of equality and the reality of oppression.

Women are a crucial part of the workforce, and some are reaching senior positions.

The percentage of women on the boards of the top FTSE 100 companies has more than doubled since 2011. And more women are in professions such as politics and journalism.

They are a third more likely than men to go to university in Britain, and more likely to get a 2:1 or first class degree when they graduate.

But even as women enter the most prestigious universities they are still subject to sexism.

Oxford has the highest rate of sexual harassment cases out of all universities in Britain.

According to a Guardian newspaper investigation earlier this year sexual harassment in academia is at an “epidemic level”.

**M**ANY women are encouraged to resolve cases of harassment informally and not even lodge official complaints.

A senior lecturer talking about her experience explains that reporting it would turn her into “a pariah”.

“You're not going to be believed and if you try to complain then you will have no career,” she said.

“I think this is common in academia—who are they going to believe, a lower female or a higher male?”

So women are being offered more opportunities than ever before, but finding these don't match up to the promise of equality.

Their experience has crashed into the limits of how much women have actually won in the past half a century of capitalist progress.

In the decade that followed the financial crisis, people increasingly question our rulers and their system.

Seven out of ten people don't trust politicians and six out of ten don't trust big business either.

People have found their lives getting worse at the same time as scandals have pointed right to the top of society.

MPs fiddling expenses, the phone hacking scandal, abuse revelations about Jimmy Savile and the truth about the Hillsborough disaster have all shaken the British establishment.

These scandals showed that the ruling class will go to any lengths to protect their fellows—and the contempt the powerful have for ordinary people.

So it is not surprising that sexist violence is an element of this.

The biggest response to the

scandal has been the #MeToo social media campaign, where millions have written about their experience of harassment.

#MeToo has something in common with the Everyday Sexism Project blog.

Now people can write openly about experiences that might previously have been seen as shameful.

It is valuable that women can draw strength from these projects.

But to win, this fight needs to be elevated from the spread-sheets onto the streets.

**O**ppression is experienced by individuals, but it cannot be systematically resolved on that level. We need collective action.

So, it's good a “take back the workplace” march happened in Hollywood last Sunday.

This should be repeated, and combative demonstrations should be organised.

Pickets should be held and protests should be organised by trade unions, workplaces, community groups and student unions.

We should declare a war on harassment and all institutions that allow it.

The fight against harassment is a key battle to be won in the war against sexism.

Every instance of harassment and abuse should be treated with the utmost seriousness.

This should be done consistently, and without apology.

But we also need to combine this with the fight against a system that creates and maintains the oppression of women.

The battle against sexual harassment needs to be linked to the fight for equal pay, maternity leave, free abortion on demand and free childcare.

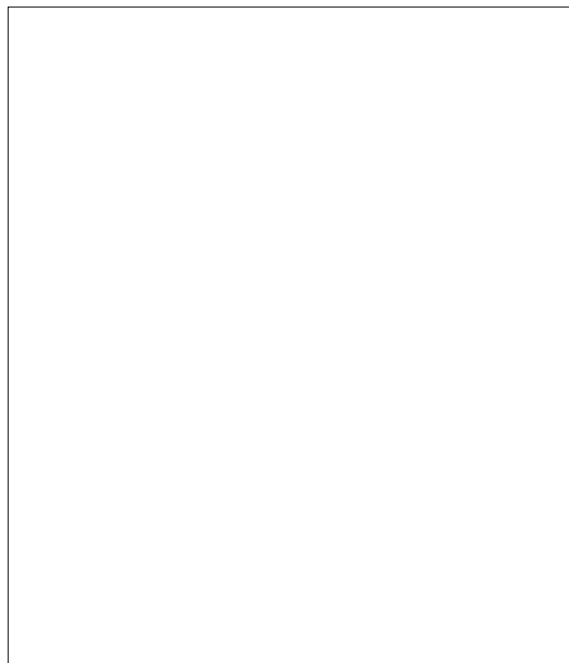
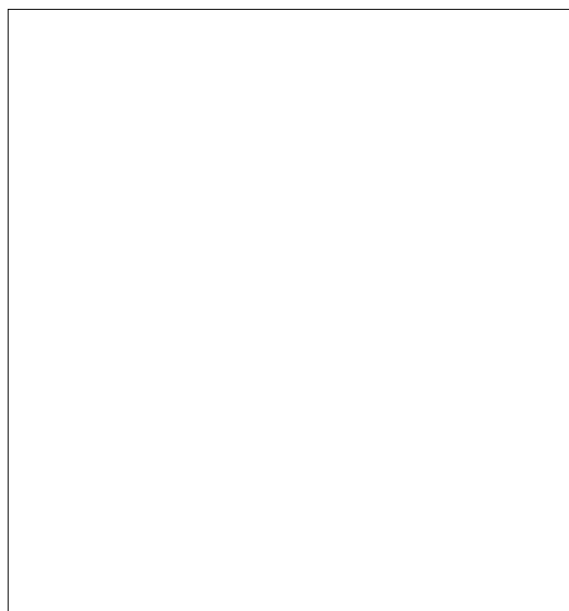
There are bigoted ideas in the ruling class, and those powerful men who take advantage of their position.

But the oppression of women is something that can't be reduced to the actions of individuals—however horrific they are.

Women's oppression is not rooted in ideas in people's head, but through how society is organised.

Capitalism still needs the family to produce the next generation of workers.

And it's important to the



**Oxford university (top) has the highest number of sexual harassment cases. Marching against the DUP bigots to demand abortion rights (above)**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

everyday functioning of capitalism that children, the sick and the elderly are mostly cared for by unpaid women's labour.

A decade of austerity is hitting people hard, and women often bear the brunt of the cuts.

In this way, bosses benefit from sexist society.

The gender pay gap now stands at 14 percent—and is growing for women in their 20s.

At the current rate of change it will take 100 years to close it.

So it's in the interests of the rich for sexist behaviour to continue unchallenged.

The fight against sexual harassment has to be twinned with the fight for a better society that uproots women's oppression.

### READ MORE

●How do we get rid of sexual abuse and violence?

Socialist Worker Available online at [bit.ly/2AqYtcS](http://bit.ly/2AqYtcS)

●Marxism and Women's Liberation by Judith Orr £9.99

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



## Peace talks showed the generals' thirst for war

Ending the war was a major priority for the Soviet government—but not everyone wanted peace



A GERMAN soldier poses for a photo with Russian soldiers

### 1917 TIMELINE

**2 November (15 November in the modern calendar)**

●The Soviet government permits nationalities to break away and declare independence

●Lenin declares the victory of the revolution assuring people “remember you are at the helm of the state”

the old Tsar's army and a woman, Anastasia Bizenko, who had assassinated one of the Tsar's ministers. The other side had differences of their own. But they agreed that peace talks wouldn't get in the way of carving up the Russian Empire.

Russia had been losing the war before the Revolution, and now the Soviet government had its hands full with the start of a counter-revolutionary Civil War.

The central powers demanded territory that included a quarter of the population of the empire, a quarter of its industry and 90 percent of its coal mines.

Should Russia sign?

The question divided the Bolsheviks, partly over how

quickly they expected a German Revolution to come.

Future dictator Joseph Stalin and other leading Bolsheviks Nikolai Bukharin and Karl Radek called for continuing the war, but now in the name of spreading revolution.

But this could have sent the message to German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers that Russia was still their enemy, and made it harder for them to turn on their own rulers.

Leon Trotsky, the Soviet foreign minister, thought the best bet was to play for time.

### Demobilising

He called for demobilising the Russian war machine without signing the treaty. Bolshevik leader Lenin initially agreed with Trotsky's “no war, no peace” position.

But on 16 February German general Max Hoffmann informed them that Germany would resume the war in two days. Refusing to sign the treaty would mean more fighting—and an even worse defeat.

The Bolshevik central committee voted only by seven to six to accept the treaty, and that took a threat by Lenin to resign if they didn't.

Despite its harsh terms, the treaty did free up the Russian Soviet government to fight the Civil War and survive.

But it didn't help the rulers of the Central Powers, who faced revolutions in both Germany and Hungary before the year was out.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution [tinyurl.com/sw1917](http://tinyurl.com/sw1917)



**The rulers of Europe were horrified by the end of secret negotiations**

# A shift to the left for Labour in Scotland?

by NICK CLARK

**THE NEW leader of the Scottish Labour Party was set to be named on Saturday—with left-backed candidate Richard Leonard hoping to win the election.**

Leonard received far more nominations from Labour Party branches and trade unions. His opponent, Anas Sarwar, won most Labour MPs, MSPs and MEPs.

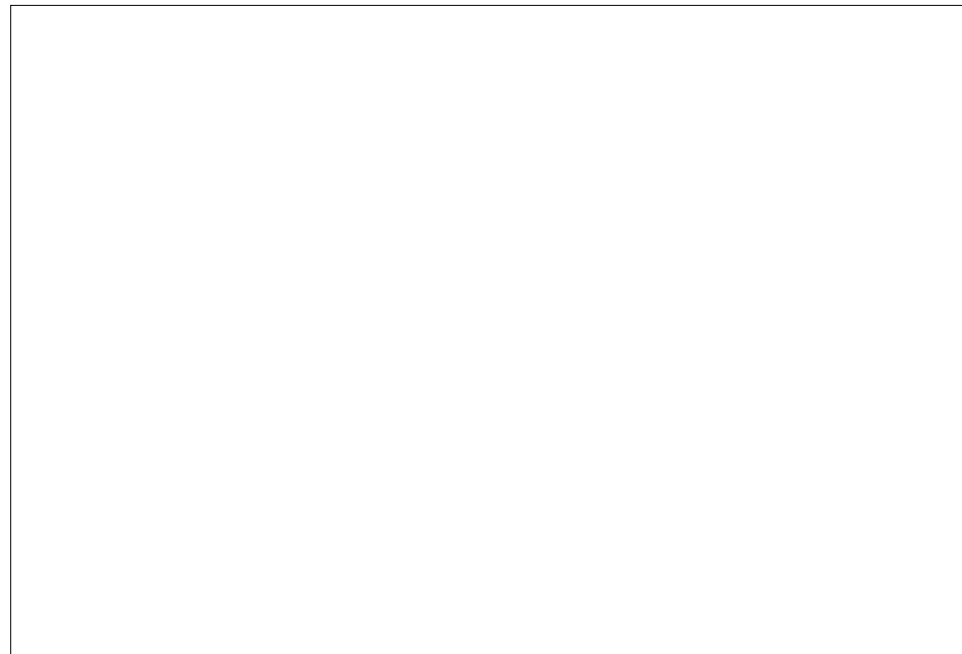
It's the same split that led to Corbyn's election as leader in 2015. In Scotland, as in the rest of Britain, ordinary Labour supporters have shown they want a left wing party.

## Establishment

The Labour establishment has always preferred a party that backs austerity-lite, defence of the British state, war and pandering to racism.

Much of the media coverage during the election has focussed on how acrimonious the campaign has been.

There's been less focus on the argument—although that's partly because the big political arguments never really got going.



A VICTORY for Richard Leonard would be seen as a boost for Jeremy Corbyn

Leonard's campaign has more closely echoed the tone of Jeremy Corbyn's general election and leadership campaigns. But he has resisted being called a "Corbynista".

His campaign has promised "real change" and a more radical Scottish Labour Party.

Leonard wrote on Sunday, "We are at a turning point. We simply cannot go back to an old style of politics."

"We must go forward learning the lessons of the June general election. We stood on a radical manifesto which offered people hope

in a campaign led by Jeremy Corbyn, a principled and consistent leader, who embodied that sense of hope."

The candidates did have different policies.

But they tended to be differences of scale and emphasis rather than fundamental

political disagreements. In many cases their manifestos were almost identical.

For instance on housing Sarwar said he wanted to build 25,000 "social, affordable and private" homes every year.

Meanwhile Leonard said he wanted "a minimum of 12,000 new social homes for rent each year".

Sarwar wanted "compulsory purchase orders to tackle rogue landlords" while Leonard wanted "tough rent controls to prevent exploitation by landlords".

And on child poverty Leonard said he wanted to "increase child benefit by £5 per month for every Scottish child", while Sarwar wanted to introduce a Scottish child tax credit of £10 a month.

Both wanted grants to help parents pay for school uniforms, and both wanted to end private schools' exemption from non-domestic tax rates.

The similarities are partly because the party's left wing membership and success at the general election forced Sarwar to adapt to the left.

His campaign sounded closer to Corbyn's policies

than previous Scottish leader Kezia Dugdale ever did.

One dividing line was over Trident nuclear missiles.

Although it didn't appear in his manifesto, Leonard had said at hustings that he was opposed to Trident renewal. He added that there must be protection for the workforce.

## Renewal

Sarwar said he was for Trident renewal. He justified this by saying it was what Labour stood for at the general election.

Leonard has backed giving the Scottish government more procurement powers to award contracts to companies with better employment rights for workers.

And he wants workers to be able to buy any business that goes up for sale.

A victory for Leonard, as a candidate associated with a break from the right wing Labour, could help the party recover. But it won't be enough.

Labour has to be radical enough to end Trident.

And it has prove its commitment to ending austerity by starting with its own councils.

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# What kind of society could solve the climate crisis?

United Nations talks this month are the latest chapter in our rulers' failure to deal with climate change. But there are still solutions, argues Dave Sewell

**CLIMATE CHANGE** is at the centre of an environmental crisis that threatens humanity's survival.

If emissions don't stop rising some scientists predict warming of four degrees, six degrees or more before the end of the century. The consequences would be catastrophic.

So United Nations talks—continuing in Bonn, Germany, this week—aim to limit warming to 1.5 degrees in line with the 2015 Paris agreement. But that ship may already have sailed (see below).

We can make demands and fight for them in the here and now. But to really deal with the climate crisis will mean a much more fundamental transformation of society.

Capitalism's dependence on fossil fuels shapes every aspect of our society, from the layout of our towns and cities to the food on our plates. All of this must change.

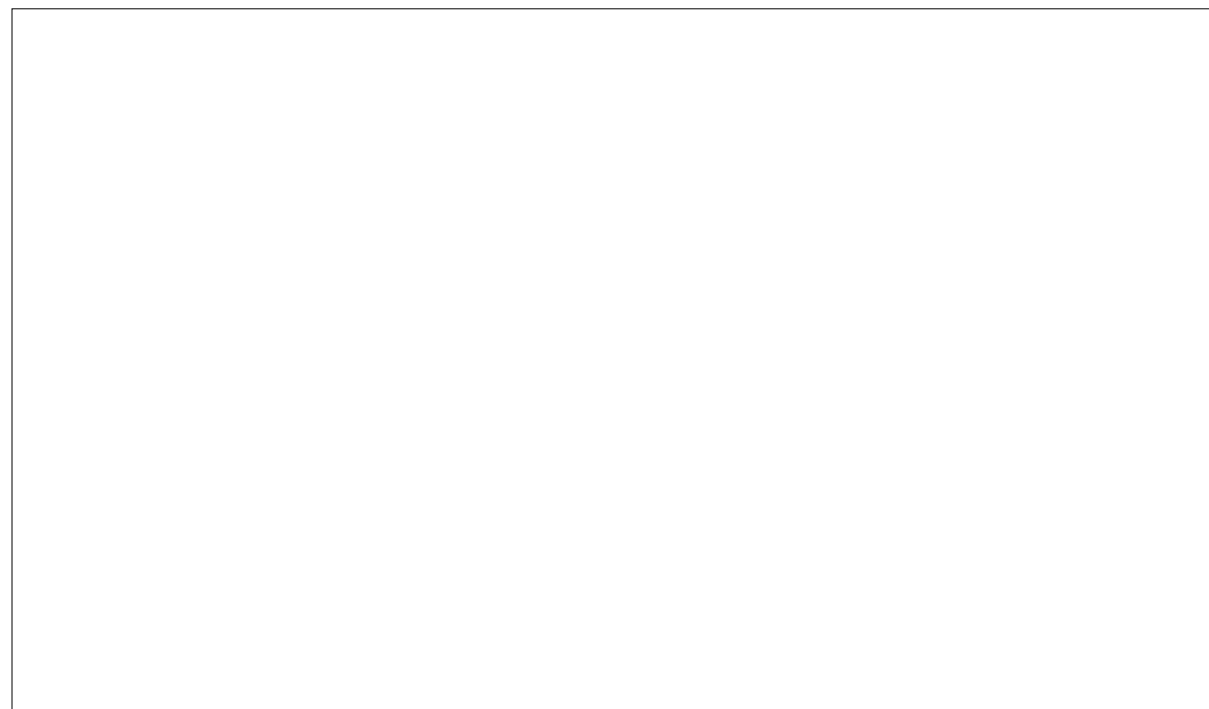
## Commodities

Production is directed by a race to sell commodities—any commodities—no matter how pointless.

Competition is said to encourage industries to operate efficiently. Instead it creates duplication, over-production and waste.

Cars and smartphones are designed to wear out or become outdated so their owners buy new ones. Retail firms use extra packaging merely to cut delivery costs.

Control of oil and gas supplies boosts governments' domestic capitalist economies, their international bargaining strength and the murderous reach of their armed forces. The military generates huge emissions that governments refuse to even



THE WAY society is organised—such as requiring people to commute to work—generates huge emissions

count. It must be disarmed.

Much of the energy used to heat homes leaks straight outside. Forcing landlords to insulate buildings could start to make housing sustainable. But our whole urban landscape is built on a contradiction.

People are brought together in centralised office blocks, industrial estates or town centres to work. Outside work they are scattered in individual households across sprawling suburbs.

This relies on workers doing hundreds of hours of unpaid labour every year, commuting, shopping, cooking

and cleaning. It also relies on fossil fuels.

Road emissions would plummet if people had the right to decent homes and services near their place of work, along with better public transport.

Collective kitchens could eliminate food poverty—and an absurdly inefficient system of distribution.

Food wouldn't need wrapping in tiny parcels of plastic, delivering to competing supermarkets then taken home—with fleets of refuse trucks sent after the inevitable waste.

Equally far-reaching changes are needed in the countryside to sustain

food production without the fossil fuel-based pesticides, fertilisers and machinery that defines it today.

The aviation industry's expansion needs to be reversed, flights rationed and shared fairly.

Challenging the intensification of work would help people relax without having to fly to cram holidays into the little time that's left.

The changes we need intersect with struggles already underway.

But the demands they raise ultimately point to a different kind of society—socialism based on human need.

## Suffering that could be halted

**MISRULE** by corporations and states turns storms and droughts into human catastrophes. Hurricane Irma flattened most homes on the island of St Martin this summer but more



Damage in St Martin

solidly built government buildings survived.

Droughts linked to climate change in Sudan and Somalia have helped trigger famines.

There is still more than enough food for everyone on Earth.

War stops it getting to people—and the market stops them affording it.

People escape threats to their lives and livelihoods by migrating.

The laws, fences and prisons that restrict migration could become one of the biggest killers.

## Market won't scrap fossil fuel

**Renewable** energy sources get better all the time. They could replace most fossil fuel use.

But polluting firms are heavily invested in fossil fuels.

Different renewables are tied to certain places and produce energy



Renewable energy source

at different times. But bosses want energy they can buy in unlimited quantities whenever and wherever they can make a profit.

They see renewable energy sources as a complement to fossil fuels at best.

Renewable energy needs to replace fossil fuels.

But to fully realise renewable energy's potential would take a planned economy.

## Things can be done to bring down emissions now

**THE MOST** immediate climate threat is from carbon dioxide emissions released by burning fossil fuels.

They trap heat in the atmosphere and warm the climate.

So far the average global surface temperature has risen by one degree Celsius—enough to trigger violent storms, floods and droughts and begin to break up the ice caps.

If emissions don't stop rising some scientists predict huge increases

in temperature before the end of the century.

The consequences would be catastrophic.

If emissions stopped completely tomorrow, the carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere would continue to warm the planet for decades.

### Thawing

The warming so far has begun to release natural greenhouse gases. This is already having an impact such as the thawing vast frozen bogs in Siberia, that could

drive further warming.

One study recently made headlines by claiming that limiting increases to 1.5 degrees is not quite physically impossible.

But even this estimate requires emissions to start falling sharply now and reach zero by 2055.

That's far bigger than the Paris agreement's feeble targets—and governments aren't sticking to those.

We must adapt to survive a hotter world of hurricanes, droughts

and rising seas.

But the single most important factor is slashing emissions to limit the extent and slow the pace of warming.

For that, most of the world's existing oil, gas and coal reserves need to stay in the ground.

Oil companies need to abandon their desperate search for new sources—such as through fracking and deep sea drilling—and write off most of those they already control.

The workers they

employ must be

redeployed to put their skills and labour to better use.

The change we need is beyond individual lifestyle choices or minor reforms.

It will mean facing down some of the world's biggest and most powerful companies—and the states intertwined with them.

Our society is addicted to fossil fuels because its ruling class is addicted to profit.

Breaking the addiction means breaking that class's power.

## IN BRIEF

**Oppose anti-choice bigots in Leeds**

PRO-CHOICE ACTIVISTS were set to take on anti-abortionists in Leeds on Wednesday.

The anti-choice Abort 67 group plans a protest to mark 50 years since the 1967 Abortion Act.

A counter-protest will defend a woman's right to choose.

●Join the pro-choice protest – Wednesday 15 November, 7.30pm, Gateway at St Marks Church, St Marks Road, LS2 9AF.

**'You're baking us angry,' say workers**

WORKERS AT the Kingsmill bakery in West Bromwich are being balloted over "a paltry pay offer".

The 130 drivers, maintenance workers and other workers have been offered a 2 percent pay rise plus an extra £150 a year for 2017 and 2018.

Kingsmill drivers make between up to £28,000 a year while drivers for other firms get as much as £42,000.

The ballot closes on Monday 27 November.

**Struggle is boiling over in North West**

BRITISH GAS workers who install and service boilers in the North West of England began a ballot for strikes on Thursday of last week.

Bosses suspended three of the workers' GMB union reps on 8 August.

The union said bosses are "acting complaints allegedly made by employees" who said "they felt bullied and intimidated by open comments made on WhatsApp".

A GMB organiser said the union "believes this is a direct attack the union and its members."

The reps face dismissal if the disciplinarys for gross misconduct are upheld. The ballot ends of 22 November.

**Commemorating the Pentonville Five**

UNITE UNION general secretary Len McCluskey will be among the speakers at a celebration to mark 45 years since the release of the Pentonville Five dockers in 1972 by mass union action.

In 1972 five dockers were imprisoned in Pentonville prison in north London for picketing.

In response workers walked out unofficially in solidarity. And the walkouts quickly grew into mass action across Britain.

The celebration is organised by the Cities of London and Westminster Trades Council, the Dockers' Network and Unite.

●Friday 1 December, 6pm, East Ham Workingmen's Club, 2 Boleyn Road, London, E6 1QE.

## ANTI-FRACKING



PROTESTERS ON Preston New Road

PICTURE: MARTIN EMPSON

# Solidarity protest at Lancashire frack site

by SARAH ENSOR and MARTIN EMPSON

**UP TO 200 trade unionists and environmental campaigners joined an anti-fracking solidarity rally and march at the Preston New Road fracking site near Blackpool, Lancashire, last Saturday.**

A long-standing camp at Preston New Road has been protesting against Cuadrilla's fracking plans.

The Tories overturned the county council's vote and gave Cuadrilla permission to drill last year.

But today the drill stands behind heavy metal fencing guarded by private security guards and a large police presence.

The continuous protest

against Cuadrilla means that drilling has only just begun at the site. Activists from the Bfawu, PCS, UCU, NUT, Unite and Unison unions joined the protest with campaigners from the Campaign Against Climate Change.

**Support**

Judy Paskell from the campaign said, "It is really good to see the unions come out in support of the campaign to stop fracking here."

"We need a mass movement that forces the government to ban fracking like in Scotland."

Cuadrilla and its allies have tried to drum up support in the Fylde region with promises that fracking would create jobs.

But investing in renewable energy would create

more jobs, as the Million Climate Jobs report has shown.

The demonstration follows another on Saturday of last week at Kirby Misperton in Ryedale, North Yorkshire, where Third Energy threatens to begin fracking imminently.

The government supports fracking because it is committed to fossil fuels.

Clara Paillard from the PCS union told Socialist Worker, "Almost the entire trade union movement is for climate resistance."

"Climate resolutions passed at TUC support public ownership of energy."

"Anti fracking resistance is part of global struggle and 2018 will see a national demo against fracking uniting communities, workers and the climate movement."

## BUS WORKERS



Bus strikes can have a big impact on London's infrastructure, such as in 2015 over London-wide pay rates PICTURE: SASHA SIMIC

## Driven around the bend

BUS DRIVERS in London are being encouraged to work in unsafe conditions and are putting passengers at risk, says the Unite union.

London Assembly published a Driven to Distraction report on conditions for bus drivers in July 2017.

Transport for London (TfL) published its response this week, but Unite says it doesn't go far enough in tackling the issues.

One of the report's recommendations was for an independent report into conditions for bus drivers. But TfL rejected this, and said, "We plan to discuss this matter at the bus safety summit this month".

Some 25 people have been killed by London buses in the last two years. And there are

concerns that bus companies are not prioritising safety.

A bus driver and Unite member spoke to Socialist Worker. "Companies are incentivised over mileage not safety," he said. "So if you check your bus in the morning and realise something is wrong, you still have to go out on the road."

Concerns are not just about safety, with many routes not have toilet or rest break facilities.

Bus drivers are currently fighting for a "Bill of Rights" which include demands decent rest breaks, such as training, toilet facilities and sick leave.

The driver said, "We're not talking small money here, it's TfL. They should build infrastructure so drivers can go to the toilet."

## FIGHTING THE CUTS



Campaigners protested against the rollout of the Universal Credit (UC) benefit in Portsmouth last week. They met outside the offices of local MP and newly-promoted cabinet minister Penny Mordaunt. The People's Assembly has called a national day of action over UC on 21 November

## ANTI-RACISM

## Stop the FLA in Scotland

**ANTI-RACISTS IN Scotland will take to the streets of Edinburgh at the same time as the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) marches in Glasgow on 25 November.**

Campaigners were set to leaflet football grounds this weekend against the FLA.

A statement circulated by Stand Up To Racism, Scotland, said, "We are deeply worried that some on the extreme racist and fascist right are attempting to use the FLA to win an audience for their political agenda."

The statement has been

signed by MPs and MSPs, trade union leaders and anti-racist campaigners.

They include Labour MSP Neil Findlay, PCS union Scotland national officer Joy Dunn and EIS-Fela union vice president Pam Currie.

The FLA march is on the same day as the annual anti-racist march in Glasgow called by the Scottish TUC. It assembles at Glasgow Green at 10.30am.

●No to racism, no to Islamophobia, Saturday 25 November, 9.30am, Edinburgh city centre. For updates go to [bit.ly/2zxrruZ](http://bit.ly/2zxrruZ)

## CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

## Walkouts can put the brakes on new test

CIVIL SERVICE workers in the Driver Vehicle and Standards Agency (DVSA) have given notice of action short of strike set to begin on Friday of next week.

The PCS union members are also set to strike on 4 and 5 December.

The action is timed to coincide with the roll out of the new driving test.

The dispute centres on operational workers having to travel up to 90 minutes a day during their own time.

And management are refusing to allow staff to attend their usual workplaces.

The dispute has been

reignited as the Department for Transport (DfT) and the DVSA haven't reach agreement over the last two years of talks.

During the PCS ballot DVSA and the DfT sought to reach a sweetheart deal with the Prospect union.

PCS members voted 84 percent to strike on a 70 percent turnout. Prospect members also rejected an offer despite their union leadership recommending it.

Management have continued to reject all of our proposals. This dispute will include around 1,500 PCS members. **Paul Williams, DfT Group President (pc)**

SOME 3,000 civil service workers joined the PCS union during its recent ballot over ending the one percent pay cap.

The same campaign returned a 79 percent vote in favour of striking to beat the cap on a turnout of almost 49 percent. That's just marginally short of the government's 50 percent turnout threshold.

Although the ballot was only consultative, it showed that there's a real mood for action over pay among PCS members.

## EDUCATION

# School strikers are sick of penny-pinching bosses

by SADIE ROBINSON

**GMB AND NEU union members struck at Charlton Park Academy in Greenwich, south east London, last Tuesday and Thursday, to defend their sick pay.**

Workers on newer contracts at the school now receive less sick pay than those on older contracts.

Strikers were furious that head teacher Mark Dale-Emberton didn't inform them of the change—and had told parents their strike days were “inset days”.

GMB general secretary Tim Roache spoke to strikers on the picket line last Thursday.

## Academies

“This is not just about Charlton Park Academy,” he said. “If this academy gets away with it, other academies will try and do the same.”

“Stay strong, stay together and we will win this dispute.”

Because children at the school have special educational needs and challenging behaviour, workers are at a higher risk of assault and injury.

Striker and NEU member Annette explained how workers discovered the attack on sick pay when one worker was off sick



DETERMINATION ON the picket line in south east London

PICTURE: GMB SOUTHERN REGION

after being assaulted. “After a certain time she discovered she wasn't getting sick pay,” said Annette.

“The head has changed our terms and conditions without telling us.”

Workers were set to strike again on Thursday and next Tuesday.

Talks at conciliation

service Acas on Monday failed to resolve the dispute.

## Lies

The school became an academy in 2012—and many of those on the picket line said this lies at the root of the attack.

Striker and GMB rep Rob told Socialist Worker, “Before

the school was an academy we were all on Greenwich council's conditions.

“The head doesn't seem to understand what he's taken from us.”

Martin Powell-Davies, London secretary for the NEU, said the dispute showed that “academisation gives the potential of getting rid of

national pay and conditions”.

GMB member Bel said, “Academies have got carte blanche to do whatever they want. We need to get the school back under council control.”

Some names have been changed. To send solidarity go to **Greenwich Teachers NUT** on Facebook

## UNIVERSITIES

## Lecturers to ballot over pensions

UCU UNION members have voted for a ballot for escalating strikes to defend their pensions. Attacks on their USS pension scheme could slash the value of workers' pensions by half.

Workers in older universities are part of the defined benefit scheme.

The pension scheme is in surplus. But bosses have valued it as being in deficit based on estimates of how much the scheme will pay out in the future.

They want to replace USS with a worse defined contributions scheme.

UCU members met for a special conference to discuss the attacks last Thursday. They voted to ballot members for escalating strikes and a work to rule, including marking boycotts.

The ballot could begin next month if bosses don't back down.

There is deep anger over the attack among UCU members. Some 87 percent backed industrial action to defend the scheme on a turnout of nearly 56 percent in an online consultation last month.

UCU members are now preparing to lobby MPs and hold public rallies to galvanise support.

The attack on USS is part of a wider assault on workers' pensions. Everyone should get behind the UCU members' fight.

The UCU Left will hold its annual conference at Soas University of London on Saturday from 10am until 4pm. To register for your place go to [bit.ly/2yWbLID](http://bit.ly/2yWbLID)

## POSTAL AND TELECOMS WORKERS

## Royal Mail workers could stage national walkout if talks over pension attack fail

TALKS BETWEEN Royal Mail bosses and CWU union leaders were set to continue this week in a major dispute that looks likely to lead to a national strike.

A letter to CWU members in London from regional officials said that “strike action before Christmas remains a real possibility”.

Royal Mail bosses are planning a major attack on workers' pensions, pay and conditions.

They want to scrap postal workers' defined benefits pensions scheme and replace it with a worse defined contribution scheme.

This would mean less money is paid into workers' pension scheme throughout



CWU union members protest

their careers.

They also want to give workers a paltry pay deal and reorganise Royal Mail's delivery model, moving towards a casual workforce.

Socialist Worker says there should be strikes unless there is a deal that:

Guarantees a pension scheme for all workers in

the industry, not just those who've worked there the longest

Guives workers an above-inflation pay rise not linked to productivity deals  
Guarantees that workers aren't forced to change their hours to fit in with Royal Mail's profit drive  
Guives workers a shorter working week—without loss of pay

THE CWU union staged a “Close the Gap” week of action campaigning for equal pay for telecom workers in BT.

They want workers employed by the Manpower recruitment agency to be paid at least the Living Wage of £8.75 an hour.

## TAXI DRIVERS

## Judge rejects Uber appeal against employment rights

UBER TAXI drivers celebrated the latest legal ruling against the firm last week.

The firm lost its appeal that drivers should not be classified as workers. Without the classification drivers would not have minimum statutory protections such as the minimum wage.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal upheld its decision that any driver who had the firm's app switched on was working for the company and should be entitled to a “worker” contract.

James Farrar is one of the two people who brought the initial employment tribunal claim against Uber. “It is time for the mayor of London, Transport for London and the transport secretary to step up and

use their leverage to defend workers' rights,” he said.

It's not clear if Uber will go on to the next stage of the appeals process or straight to the Supreme Court.

Uber's acting general manager in Britain Tom Elvidge said, “Almost all taxi drivers have been self-employed long before our app existed.”

Yaseen Aslam, the other driver bringing the case against Uber, said, “The judge confirmed that Uber is unlawfully denying our rights.”

“Companies are hiding behind technology, bogusly classifying people as self-employed so they can get away from paying minimum wage.”

“That can't be allowed to happen.”

## PALESTINE

## Cambridge clampdown

STUDENTS AND academics at Cambridge University were outraged last Wednesday after the university management intervened against a Palestine solidarity meeting.

The Palestine society organised the meeting to discuss the campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel.

But university officials threatened to cancel the event unless organisers agreed to replace the chair with Cambridge's director of communications.

Academics from Cambridge and Warwick universities and Soas University of London signed an open letter protesting against management's actions.



DRIVERS PICKETING the Rusholme bus depot in Manchester on Monday over pay

PICTURE: MARTIN EMPSON

# STRIKERS ROCK BUSES AND RAIL

by SARAH BATES

**WORKERS AT two bus companies in the North West of England struck on Monday, following a coordinated bus and train strike on Wednesday of last week.**

Some 2,000 bus drivers and engineers in the Unite and GMB unions on Arriva North West have struck every Monday in October and November.

So have First Manchester drivers in the Unite union at a depot in Rusholme, central Manchester.

Workers in both disputes are fighting for a pay rise in line with inflation and an end to pay differences between depots.

The Rusholme workers voted by 96 percent for strikes. They are being paid £5,000 less than drivers at other depots, according to Unite.

Unite regional officer Neil Clarke said, "For four years First Manchester has repeated that pay will be harmonised, but it has always been jam tomorrow—and now our members are fed

up with dry bread and the bosses' stale words."

Workers on six rail networks in the RMT union, who are fighting to keep guards on the train, struck alongside Arriva North West workers last Wednesday.

## Gridlock

The strike was so strong that roads across north west England were gridlocked and not a single bus left some depots.

Agency staff in the canteen at one of the depots were allegedly told by agency bosses that they had to use their annual leave during strike days.

Driver and Unite member Ged was one of up to 70 pickets at Green Lane Stonycroft depot in Liverpool from the early hours of the morning.

"Management is offering us pennies in the negotiations," he said. "Talks are breaking down because they're not serious offers."

"Loads of unions have been coming to our picket line and showing us solidarity."

The strike had got a lot of support from passengers.

"We feel really sorry for



Train guards at London Waterloo station

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

**“Loads of unions have been coming to our picket line in solidarity”**

the public, and understand they've now got huge problems travelling during the strike," said Ged.

"But most people are really supportive and understand why we're doing it."

Last week was the first time the bus workers have walked out at the same time as train workers.

The RMT members are fighting a long-running dispute against driver only operation (DOO) on six

networks around England.

The union say implementing DOO will make travel unsafe and inaccessible.

A South Western Railway guard told Socialist Worker, "We play a huge role in human contact for our customers, like helping wheelchair users onto trains or making sure people feel OK travelling."

"I've had to break up fights because people were being homophobic or racist to other passengers."

## Walkout

The walkout last Wednesday involved workers on Southern, Greater Anglia, South Western Railway, Northern, Merseyrail and, the latest addition, Island Line.

Those on Southern, Greater Anglia and South Western also walked out on Thursday.

London Waterloo station worker and RMT branch secretary Ricky Goodman said, "Passengers are so supportive of our action, especially women who understand that guards play an important role in safety."

"We feel really passionate

about the job we do and passionate about this strike".

Unfortunately train drivers in the Aslef union have voted by 79 percent to accept an offer on Southern rail, ending an 18-month dispute.

The deal will give them a 28.5 percent pay rise over five years.

But it is based on an agreement that trains can sometimes run without a second safety-trained staff member.

It says that this won't happen "except in exceptional circumstances".

But bosses' definition of "exceptional" includes such everyday circumstances as workers being ill or trains running late.

The guard said that, despite the Aslef deal, "you can't put a price on safety."

"The Aslef deal makes us want to fight more, because we're fighting for our livelihoods too," they said.

"The exceptional circumstances they talk about happen every single day."

Escalating the strikes can beat back the transport bosses and the Tories who stand behind them.